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A
S K E T C H
OF THE
SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS
INTO WHICH
THE CHRISTIAN WORLD IS DIVIDED

ACCOMPANIED WITH
A PERSUASIVE TO RELIGIOUS MODERATION
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A Short Account of *Atheism, Deism, Judaism, and Christianity*
adapted to the present Times.

By JOHN EVANS, A.M.
Pastor of a Congregation, meeting in Worship Street.

Second Edition with considerable Addition.

Συνερχομεν τῇ ἐνότητι τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῇ
συνδόμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης.

“ May God awaken the true genuine spirit of Christianity, which
suffers very much from the looseness and libertinism of some; and from
the too great narrowness of others.

Dr. LELAND's Letter to Dr. DODDRIEGE.

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ADVERTISEMENT
TO
JAMES DUNBAR, LL.D. F.R.S. ED.

LATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, KING'S COLLEGE,
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN;

THIS LITTLE MANUAL,

DRAWN UP FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH
IN THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

(that *best* of Sciences, which teaches Men how to live, and how to die)

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LATE ACADEMICAL PUPIL,

AND MUCH OBLIGED FRIEND,

J. EVANS.

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TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE Author being engaged in the private tuition of Youth, feels himself happy in planning and executing any work (however small) which may inform their minds, rouse their diligence, and facilitate their improvement. The frequent enquiries of young people respecting the prevailing differences of religious sentiment, suggested to him the utility of the present publication, which is now humbly submitted to the candour of the Public. He has taken considerable pains to inform himself on the subject, and is indebted to some intelligent friends who inspected the manuscript, and favored him with their emendations. Ignorance and uncharitableness are two inveterate foes with which religion has to combat. To remove the one, and prevent the other, is the professed aim of the following pages.

The *sketch of the denominations* is also designed to correct mistaken notions which are often entertained concerning the tenets of those who differ from us; and the subsequent *persuasive* is intended to check a propensity to severe and uncharitable judgments. Throughout the whole the Author has been studious of a perspicuous brevity. But if the Reader wishes to enlarge his acquaintance with the opinions of the religious world, he has only to consult the writers mentioned in the *sketch* of most of the denominations, where his curiosity will be amply gratified.

Being a firm believer in the truth, and a warm admirer of the excellence of the Christian Religion, the Author would fain remove any one obstacle which impedes its progress among mankind, or diminishes its efficacy where it is already known. Should, therefore, this little manual bring only even two Christians of different denominations to a more accurate knowledge of each other's tenets, and incline them to exercise towards one another that *charity which thinketh no evil*, it will afford him more real satisfaction than the publication of a work of the most pompous nature.

London,

Jan. 1, 1795.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE very flattering testimonies of approbation with which the Author hath been honored, both with respect to the impartiality and tendency of this little work, demand his warmest thanks, and have induced him to correct and to enlarge considerably this *second* edition, which has been so speedily called for by an indulgent public. The account of *Paganism*, and of *Mahometanism*—of *Judaism*, and of *Christianity*, together with various other articles, are newly inserted, and each denomination formerly mentioned has received some additions, either explanatory of its tenets, or illustrative of its history. In the particulars introduced, the utmost correctness has been studied, and did it not favour of ostentation, the several volumes should have been specified, whence a great portion of the information has been obtained. Notwithstanding the Author's special aim at accuracy, yet in a publication of so miscellaneous a nature, it is almost impossible not to have fallen into some mistakes. He, however, sincerely hopes that they are as trivial as they are unintentional. He has no interest to promote but that of *truth*, and *truth* does not require that the sentiments of any one man, or of any one body of men, should be mutilated or misrepresented.*

The

* The Writer considers himself honored in no small degree, by the very favorable notice which the *Analytical*, the *Critical*, and the

The Author understood that the generality of persons, who had favored him with a perusal, expressed a wish that the account of the respective sects had been more minute and extensive. To this circumstance great attention has been paid, and in the present edition their laudable curiosity will receive an ampler gratification. But he still begs leave to remind the reader that the *title* promises only a *Sketch*, and is intended by its brevity for the RISING GENERATION, more especially for the youth who are under his private tuition, and for the youth who attend his public ministry.

Indeed in drawing up this Sketch of the denominations, the Author never imagined himself bound, like the *ecclesiastical* historian, to record every fact connected with their rise and progress, or to pourtray every shade of difference by which they might be distinguished. He rather considered himself as occupying the province of the *natural* historian, who, when classing together the different kinds of the human race, attempts not to delineate *every* variation of feature, but holds up those more prominent traits of countenance which are impressed on mankind throughout the several regions of the habitable globe.*

Respecting

the *English* Reviewers have taken of this publication, and he assures them that several of the emendations which were so obligingly suggested, have been gratefully adopted.

* To a certain Prelate of distinguished worth and abilities, the Author is much indebted for his very polite note, in which his lordship is pleased to intimate his approbation of the tendency of this little work. Great obligations are also due to John Brent, Esq. of Blackheath, and to Thomas Cook, Esq. of the Isle of Wight, for their early patronage of it; as well as to Samuel Brent, Esq. of Rotherhithe,

Respecting the *reflections* which are subjoined, (now somewhat enlarged) the Author hath only to declare that he hath written them in the sincerity of his heart, upon the broad and liberal principles of a *Protestant Dissenter*. It is, however, with peculiar satisfaction that he has found, since the first publication of this manual, that Bishop Taylor, in his *Liberty of Prophecyng*—Bishop Hall, in his *treatise on Moderation*; and the ever memorable John Hales, in his *tract on Schism*, (divines of the last century, distinguished for their genius, their literature, and their piety) adopted a similar train of sentiment. Their example was followed by *Burnet, Tillotson, and Hoadley*, names which will be ever dear to the firm and enlightened friends of Christianity. Reference is more especially made to these divines of an *established church*, since they cannot be suspected of *sectarian* principles, and bear, therefore, a more unexceptionable testimony to the excellent, though much despised cause of CHRISTIAN MODERATION.

The Author is aware, that for the same reason that the *passionate* charge the mild and unassuming, with a *want of spirit*, zealots of every description are perpetually accusing the advocates of Moderation, with a proneness to *indifference*. But this is an *iniquitous* charge, since it is well known that

Notwithstanding, for free access to his valuable library, whence many interesting particulars have been derived. Nor would the Author forget to return his thanks to the Rev. Dr. Kippis, the Rev. Dr. Disney, the Rev. Dr. Toulmin, the Rev. Hugh Worthington, the Rev. Robert Winter, the Rev. Edmund Butcher, the Rev. Samuel Palmer, and other very respectable individuals of different denominations for their obliging communications.

that some of the most liberal among clergy and laity, have been distinguished for their zeal to support what appeared to them to be the interests of truth. That the candid have fallen into indifference, and that the zealous have been betrayed into persecution, cannot be denied, but surely no man in his senses will, on that account, seriously maintain, that candor and indifference, zeal and persecution are inseparably connected. Against a spirit of *indifference*, either as to the speculative or practical branches of religion, the Author here solemnly protests, nor indeed will any person accuse him of it who has read with attention his *Address to the General Baptists on the revival of Religion*. While, with our Blessed Saviour, he exhorts Christians *to love one another*—so on the other hand, with the Apostle Paul, he loudly calls upon them *to contend zealously*, (but not intemperately) *for the faith once delivered to the saints*.

Dr. Prideaux, in his life of Mahomet, speaking of the dissensions of the sixth century, remarks, “Christians having drawn the abstrusest niceties into controversy, did thereby so destroy peace, love and charity among themselves, that they lost the whole substance of their religion, and in a manner drove Christianity quite out of the world; so that the Saracens, taking advantage of the weakness of power, and the distractions of councils which these divisions had caused, soon over-ran with terrible devastation all the eastern provinces of the Roman empire—turned every where their churches into mosques, and forced on them the abominable imposture of Mahometanism.” From this

this lamentable fact we may learn an awful and an instructive lesson. How far this affecting description of the *sixth* century may be applicable to the *eighteenth* in which we live, the sagacious contemplator of human affairs must of himself determine. But surely in an age like the present, when Atheists and Deists are on every side assailing the venerable fabric of our religion—Christians, ceasing to lay an undue stress on their private differences of opinion, should concentrate their scattered forces, and, inspired with a spirit of moderation towards each other, oppose with *one heart* and with *one soul* the COMMON ENEMY.

—May the GOD OF PEACE allay the animosities, and meliorate the temper of the Christian World. Thus will the wretched remains of bigotry, which are still to be found in *some* unhappy individuals of *every* party be gradually lessened and finally destroyed. *The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God*, wants not any adventitious aid to extend its empire over the human heart. It is *of itself* sufficient, (under the blessing of Heaven) to purify our affections and to prepare us for our *certain* and *speedy* removal into—ETERNITY.

London, July 28, 1795.

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SKETCH,

Ec. Ec.

The great lesson which every sect, and every individual of every sect, ought to learn from the history of the Church, is MODERATION. Want of genuine Moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world.

Watson, Bishop of Landaff.

THE christian world is divided into denominations, each of which is discriminated by sentiments peculiar to itself. To delineate the nature, point out the foundation, and appreciate the tendency of every individual opinion, would be an endless task. My only design is briefly to enumerate the leading tenets of the several parties which attract our notice, and to make this variety of religious opinions a ground for the exercise of moderation, together with the improvement of other Christian graces. The moderation here recommended, lies at an equal distance between an indifference to truth and the merciless spirit of uncharitable-

charitableness. It is a virtue much talked of, little understood, and less practised.

But before we delineate the tenets of the several denominations, we shall just notice the Atheist and Deist, two descriptions of persons frequently confounded together, and also Judaism and Christianity, two dispensations of revealed religion, which mutually illustrate each other.

The *Atheist* does not believe in the existence of a God. He attributes surrounding nature and all its astonishing phænomena to chance, or a fortuitous concourse of atoms. The name *Atheist* is composed of two Greek terms α and $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, signifying *without God*, and in this sense the appellation occurs in the New Testament, Ephes. ii. 12. *Without God in the world*. It is to be hoped that *direct* Atheists are few. Some persons, indeed, question the reality of such a character; and others insist, that pretensions to Atheism have their origin in pride, or are adopted as a cloak for licentiousness. In the last century, Spinoza, a foreigner, was its rected defender; and Lucilio Vanini, an Italian, of eccentric character, was burnt 1619, at Toulouse, for his atheistical tenets. Lord Bacon, in his essays, justly remarks, "That a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to *Atheism*, but depth in philosophy, bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while
the

the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may rest in them and go no further. But when it beholdeth the chain of them confederated and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

The sermons preached at Boyle's lecture---the discourses of Abernethy on the Divine Attributes, and the treatises of Dr. Balguy are an infallible antidote against Atheistical tenets. This last excellent writer thus forcibly expresses himself on the subject ;

" Of all the false doctrines and foolish opinions which ever infested the mind of man, nothing can possibly equal that of *Atheism*, which is such a monstrous contradiction to all evidence, to all the powers of understanding, and the dictates of common sense, that it may be well questioned whether any man can really fall into it by a deliberate use of his judgment. All nature so clearly points out, and so loudly proclaims a Creator of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, that whoever hears not its voice and sees not its proofs, may well be thought wilfully deaf and obstinately blind. If it be evident, self-evident, to every man of thought, that there can be no effect without a cause, what shall we say of that manifold combination of effects, that series of operations, that system of wonders which fill the uni-

verse; which present themselves to all our perceptions, and strike our minds and our senses on every side! Every faculty, every object of every faculty demonstrates a *Deity*. The meanest insect we can see, the minutest and most contemptible weed we can tread upon, is really sufficient to confound Atheism, and baffle all its pretensions. How much more that astonishing variety and multiplicity of God's works with which we are continually surrounded! Let any man survey the face of the earth, or lift up his eyes to the firmament; let him consider the nature and instincts of brute animals, and afterwards look into the operations of his own mind: will he presume to say or suppose that all the objects he meets with are nothing more than the result of unaccountable accidents and blind chance? Can he possibly conceive that such wonderful order should spring out of confusion? Or that such perfect beauty should be ever formed by the fortuitous operations of unconscious unactive particles of matter? As well, nay better, and more easily might he suppose, that an earthquake might happen to build towns and cities; or the materials carried down by a flood fit themselves up without hands into a regular fleet. For what are towns, cities, or fleets, in comparison of the vast and amazing fabric of the universe! In short,

Atheism

Atheism offers such violence to all our faculties, that it seems scarce credible it should ever really find any footing in human understanding.*

Newton, Boyle, Maclaurin, Ray, Derham, Locke, and other philosophers, distinguished for the profundity of their researches, and the extent of their erudition, are to be enrolled amongst the principal advocates for the existence and superintendence of a Deity.

The *Deists* believe in a God, but reject a written revelation from him. They are extravagant in their encomiums on natural religion, though they differ much respecting its nature, extent, obligation, and importance. Dr. Clarke, in an incomparable treatise against Deism, divides them into four classes, according to the less or greater number of articles comprised in their creed. But the present Deists are of two sorts only, those who believe, and those who disbelieve in a future state. If a *Theist* be different from a Deist, it is, that

* The arguments for the being of a God are distributed by the learned into two kinds: 1st. Arguments *a priori*, or those taken from the necessity of the divine existence: 2d. Arguments *a posteriori*, or those taken from the works of nature. Of the latter species of proof the above quotation from Dr. Balguy is a fine illustration. On the former, see the great Dr. Clarke's Essay on the being of a God, which has been deemed a master piece on the subject.

he has not had revelation proposed to him, and follows therefore the pure light of nature.*

The term *Deist* comes from the Latin word *Deus*, a God; and is applied to the rejecters of revelation, because the existence of a God is the principal article of their belief. The name was first assumed by a number of gentlemen in France and Italy, who were willing to cover their opposition to the christian revelation by a more honourable name than that of Atheists. *Viret*, a divine of eminence among the first reformers, appears to have been the first author who expressly mentions them, for in the Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to the second volume of his *Instruction Chrestienne*, published in 1563, he speaks of some persons at that time who called themselves by a new name, that of *Deists*. Deists are also

* *Paganism* is the corruption of natural religion, and is little else than the worship of idols and false gods. These were either men, as Jupiter, Hercules, Bacchus, &c. or fictitious persons, as Victory, Fame, Fever, &c. or beasts, as in Egypt, crocodiles, cats, &c. or finally, inanimate things, as onions, fire, water, &c. Upon the propagation of Christianity Paganism gradually declined. Julian the apostate made an ineffectual attempt to revive it, and it is now degenerated into gross and disgusting idolatry. Such especially was it found to be in the South Sea Islands, lately discovered by that unfortunate navigator Captain Cook.

often

often called *Infidels* (from the Latin word *Infidelis*) on account of their want of faith or belief in the Christian Religion. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was the first Deist who excited public notice in this country. Leland's *View of the Deistical Writers*, together with many other valuable treatises, afford information concerning their principles, and contain a complete refutation of their objections against revealed religion.

Indeed the objections which some Deists have made to revelation, affect not so much the religion of Jesus Christ, as laid down in the New Testament, as certain absurd doctrines and ridiculous practices which have been added to it by the weakness and wickedness of mankind. Reiterated accusations therefore of unfairness have been brought against the generality of deistical writers, and with this palpable injustice, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine stand particularly charged.

Paine's *Age of Reason* (a few pages against Atheism excepted) is an execrable publication. Even Infidels themselves are ashamed of it. The rejecters of REVELATION (before they thoughtlessly calumniate it) would do well to consider what they are able to give us in its stead, better calculated to alleviate the distresses, and bind up the bleeding heart of humanity.

Dr.

Dr. Beattie, in the eloquent conclusion of his Essay on the Immutability of Truth, speaking of Sceptics and Deists very justly remarks; " Carressed by those who call themselves the great, ingrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion. But let them know that in the solitary scenes of life there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they with sacrilegious hands attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny! Did it ever happen that the influence of their tenets disturbed the tranquility of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave? Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts! Surely every spark
of

of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if *this* consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse." Some admirable strictures on the nature and prevalence of *modern* Deism are contained in the present Bishop of London's charge to the clergy for the year 1794.

Judaism, is the religious doctrines and rites of the *Jews*, who are the descendants of Abraham, a person of eminence chosen * by God to preserve the doctrine of the divine Unity among the idolatrous nations of the earth. A complete system of *Judaism* is contained in the five books of *Moses*, their great law-giver, who was raised up to rescue them from their bondage in Egypt, and to conduct them to the possession of Canaan, the promised land. The Jewish economy is so much directed to *temporal* rewards and punishments, that it has been questioned whether the Jews had any knowledge of a future state. This opinion has been defended with vast erudition by Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*, but it has been warmly denied by Dr. Sykes and other authors of respectability. The principal sects among the Jews were the *Pharisees*, who placed religion in external ceremony—the *Sadducees*, who were remarkable for their incre-

* Soon after the Flood.

dulity, and the *Essenes*, who were distinguished by an austere sanctity. Some account of these sects will be found in the last volume of Prideaux's Connection, in Harwood's Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, and in Marsh's improved edition of Michaelis, just published. The Pharisees and Sadducees are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and an acquaintance with their principles and practices serves to illustrate many passages in the sacred history. At present the Jews have two sects, the *Caraites*, who admit no rule of religion but the law of Moses, and the *Rabbinists*, who add to the law the traditions of the Talmud.* The dispersion of the Jews took place upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman Emperor, A. D. 70. The expectation of a Messiah is the distinguishing feature of their religious system. The word MESSIAH signifies one *anointed*, or installed into an office by unction. The Jews used to anoint their kings, high priests, and sometimes prophets, at their entering upon office. Thus

* The *Talmud* is a collection of the doctrines and morality of the Jews. They have two works that bear this name, the first is called the Talmud of Jerusalem; and the other the Talmud of Babylon. The former is shorter and more obscure than that of Babylon, but is of an older date. The Talmud compiled at Babylon the Jews prefer to that of Jerusalem, as it is clearer and more extensive.

Saul, David, Solomon, and Joash, kings of Judah, received the royal unction. Thus also Aaron and his sons received the sacerdotal, and Elisha, the disciple of Elijah, received the prophetic unction.

Christians believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Messiah, in whom all the Jewish prophecies are accomplished. On this subject Dr. Priestley lately addressed them in some spirited letters, to which Mr. David Levi, a learned author amongst them, made replies. The Jews, infatuated with the idea of a *temporal* Messiah, who is to subdue the world, ~~the~~ wait for his appearance. According to Buxtoff, (a professor of Hebrew, and celebrated for rabbinical learning) some of the modern rabbins believe that the Messiah is already come, but that he will not manifest himself on account of the sins of the Jews. Others however have had recourse to the hypothesis of two Messiahs, who are to succeed each other—one in a state of humiliation and suffering—the other in a state of glory, magnificence and power. Be it however remembered that in the New Testament Jesus Christ assures us in the most explicit terms—that *he* is the Messiah. In John iv. 25. The Samaritan woman says to Jesus, *I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.* Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak to thee am He.*

According

According to the prediction of Jesus Christ, several impostors would assume the title of Messiah, and accordingly such persons have actually appeared. An history of "*False Messiahs*" has been written by a Dutchman. Barcohab was the first, who appeared in the time of Adrian—the second in 1666, was Sabbethai Levi, who turned Mahometan—and the last was Rabbi Mordecai, who was talked of in 1682. The most remarkable periods in the history of the Jews are the call of Abraham, the giving of the law by Moses, their establishment in Canaan under Joshua, the building of the Temple by Solomon, the division of the tribes—their captivity in Babylon—their return under Zerubbabel, and the destruction of their City and Temple by the Emperor Titus. Their books of the Old Testament are the most ancient and authentic records extant. For further information respecting Judaism many publications may be consulted. See the writings of Josephus, their famous historian, of which there are several translations in our language; Dr. Jennings's two volumes of Jewish antiquities, and Dr. Shaw's *Philosophy of Judaism*.†

Christianity

† The *Chinese* religion is involved in great mystery. Father Amiot, after the most assiduous researches on the subject comes to this conclusion: "The *Chinese* (says he) are a distinct people, who have

CHRISTIANITY (to which *Judaism* was introductory) is the last and more perfect dispensation of revealed religion with which God hath favored the human race. It was instituted by JESUS CHRIST, *the Son of God*, who made his appearance in Judea near 2000 years ago. He was born at Bethlehem—brought up at Nazareth, and crucified at Jerusalem. His lineage, birth, life, death, and sufferings, were minutely predicted by a succession of the Jewish prophets, and his religion is now spread over a considerable portion of the globe. The evidences of the Christian religion are comprized under—Historical

have still preserved the characteristic marks of their first origin; a people whose primitive doctrine will be found by those who take the trouble of investigating it thoroughly to agree in its essential parts with the doctrine of the chosen people, before Moses by the command of God himself had consigned the explanation of it to the sacred records; a people, in a word, whose traditional knowledge, when freed from whatever the ignorance or the superstition of later ages has added to it, may be traced back from age to age, and from epocha to epocha, without interruption for the space of 4000 years, even to the renewal of the human race by the grandson of Noah. The *King*, or canonical books of the Chinese, every where inculcate the belief of a Supreme Being, the Author and Preserver of all things. Their great Philosopher *Confucius* lived about 500 years before our Saviour's birth, and to this day each town has a palace consecrated to his memory.

testimony—Prophecies—Miracles—the internal evidence of its doctrines and precepts—and the rapidity of its first propagation among the Jews and the Gentiles.--- Though thinking men have in every age differed respecting some of the doctrines of this religion, yet they are fully agreed in the divinity of its origin, and in the benevolence of its tendency. The brevity of my plan will not suffer me to enter into detail. There are however two representations of the Christian religion, which, coming from high authority, are well deserving of an attentive consideration.

Bishop Gibson,* in his second Pastoral Letter, observes, “ It will appear that the several denominations of Christians agree both in the *substance of religion* and in the necessary *enforcements* of the *practice* of it; that the world and all things in it were created by God, and are under the direction and government of his all-powerful hand and all-seeing eye; that there is an essential difference

* The pastoral letters of Dr. Gibson are justly esteemed most masterly productions against *Infidelity* and *Enthusiasm*. It is therefore highly proper to recommend the perusal of these letters, and of works of a similar nature, at a period like the present, when *reviling Infidels* and *enthusiastic Prophets* rise up in abundance, and when it is difficult to determine which of these characters does the greatest injury to the sacred cause of Christianity.

between

between good and evil, virtue and vice; that there will be a state of future rewards and punishments according to our behaviour in this life; that Christ was a teacher sent from God, and that his Apostles were divinely inspired; that all Christians are bound to *declare* and *profess* themselves to be his disciples; that not only the exercise of the several virtues, but also a belief in Christ is necessary, in order to their obtaining the pardon of sin, the favour of God, and Eternal life; that the worship of God is to be performed chiefly by the heart in prayers, praises, and thanksgivings---and as to all other points that they are bound to live by the rules which Christ and his Apostles have left them in the holy Scriptures. Here then is a fixed, certain, and uniform rule of faith and practice, *containing all the most necessary points* of religion, established by a divine sanction---embraced as such by all denominations of Christians, and *in itself abundantly sufficient to preserve the knowledge and practice of religion in the world.*"*

* Some curious particulars respecting the religion of the *Hindoo*s in the East Indies, communicated in the *Asiatic Researches*, seem to indicate that it is a corruption of the Christian religion. How far the resemblance holds, the reader of the *Asiatic Researches* must form his own judgment. That celebrated work was published under the inspection of that great oriental scholar the late Sir W. Jones.

Dr. Sherlock (who succeeded Dr. Gibson as bishop of London) expresses himself much to the same purpose in the first volume of his sermons. Observing that the books of the New Testament may be considered either as historical, as doctrinal, or as controversial, and some as a mixture of the two last---he thus proceeds: "By the doctrinal I understand those matters of faith and rules of duty which do not regard this or that particular faith, but were intended for the use of the whole, and are to continue to the end of it. And if there be a clear law, and clearly expressed in the word, this is the law. Can words more clearly express the honor and worship we are to pay to God, or can more familiar expressions be given in this case than are to be found in the Gospel? Is not idolatry clearly condemned in the Gospel? Is there any thing relating to divine worship that we yet want instructing in? Are not the duties likewise which we owe to each other made evident and plain, and can there be any dispute about them, except what arises from lust or avarice, or other self interest? As to the peculiar benefits of the gospel, are they not declared without obscurity? Can you read the gospel and doubt whether Christ died for you? Whether God will grant pardon to the penitent, or his assistance to those who ask it; whether he will reward

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all such in glory who continue the faithful disciples of his Son? What *other revelation* do we want, or can we *desire* in these *great and weighty* concerns; or what is there *wanting* to make up a *complete system* of religion."

The immortal *Locke* also observes, "Whoever would attain to a true knowledge of the Christian religion in the full and just extent of it, let him study the holy scriptures, especially the *New Testament*, wherein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth without any mixture of error for its matter." Even *Rosseau*, the famous infidel, confessed himself struck with the majesty of the scriptures, the purity of the gospel, and the character of Jesus Christ. See *Gerard's Dissertations on the Internal Evidence of Christianity*;—*Brown's Evangelical History*;—*Dr. Willan's History of the Ministry of Jesus Christ*, combined from the Narrations of the four Evangelists, and also *Dr. Craig's Life of Christ*.—The present Deists should condescend to understand the Christian religion before they presume to write against it. For want of this necessary knowledge *Thomas Paine*, in his virulent attack on revelation, has in almost every page fallen into the most wretched and contemptible blunders. This conduct will naturally re-

mind the reader of the words of Solomon; *they shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of their folly they shall go astray.*

Many of the serious friends of Christianity are alarmed at the progress of Atheism and Deism, both at home and abroad. But let not the friends of truth be discouraged. That *revealed* (as well as natural) religion, is encumbered with difficulties has never been denied, and ~~this~~ with a considerate mind will be construed into a presumptive proof of its authenticity and excellence. "It would be a miracle (says Dr. Watson, the present Bishop of Landaff) greater than any we are instructed to believe, if there remained no difficulties; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother earth, and to day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come—the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* We live in a dissolute but enlightened age; the restraints of our religion are ill suited to the profligacy of our manners; and men are soon induced to believe that system to be false which they wish to find so: that knowledge moreover which spurns with contempt the illusions of fanaticism, and the tyranny of

of superstition is often unhappily misemployed in magnifying every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth of Christianity into an irrefragable argument of its falsehood. The Christian religion has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries; it suffers only from the misconceptions of schoolists and silly pretenders to superior wisdom: a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it, than ignorance itself. Some I know affect to believe that as the restoration of letters was ruinous to the Romish religion, so the further cultivation of them will be subversive of Christianity itself: of this there is no danger. It may be subversive of the reliques of the church of Rome, by which other churches are still polluted; of persecutions, of anathemas, of ecclesiastical domination over God's heritage, of all the silly outworks which the pride, the superstition, and the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the citadel itself is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, its master builder is God; its beauty will be found ineffable, and its strength impregnable—when it shall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, and cleared from the rubbish of human bulwarks."

It would be as useless as it is impossible to refer the reader to *all* the treatises which have been written at different periods, for the defence and illustration of the Christian religion. But the student may consult *Lardner's Credibility*, *Watson's Theological Tracts*, *Priestley's Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and *Paley's admirable View of the Evidences of Christianity* recently published. For the use of private Christians, *Doddridge's Three Sermons on the Evidences of the Christian Religion*, are warmly recommended, and also an incomparable little piece written by Dr. Samuel Chandler, and entitled, *Plain Reasons for being a Christian*. In this age of infidelity and of dissipation the minds of the young should be sacredly guarded against the errors and vices of the times. And solemnly doth it concern both ministers and parents (as they are accountable at the tribunal of heaven) to furnish the RISING GENERATION with those religious principles, which by operating on the springs of human conduct will necessarily ensure their temporal and their eternal felicity.*

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* *Mahometanism* is the religion of *Mahomet*, who was born in 571 at Mecca, a city of Arabia, and died at Medina 631. His system is a compound of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, and the *Alcoran*, which is their bible, is held in great reverence. It is replete with

Having given this preliminary account of Atheism and of Deism, of Judaism and of Christianity, we now proceed to the denominations in the Christian world. In the first ages of Christianity there were various sects which have long ago sunk into oblivion, and whose names therefore exist only in the pages of ecclesiastical history. It is not our purpose even to glance at these *ancient* sects, but only briefly notice those which in the present day attract our attention. The most distinguished may be included under the following arrangement;

with absurd representations, and is supposed to be written by a Jew. The most eloquent passage is allowed to be the following, where God is introduced, bidding the waters of the deluge to cease. "Earth swallow up the waters; heaven draw up those thou hast poured out: immediately the waters retreated, the command of God was obeyed, the ark rested on the mountains, and these words were heard, *woe to the wicked.*" Lust, ambition, and cruelty have been deemed the most prominent traits in Mahomet's conduct, and Voltaire has written a fine tragedy on this subject. The great doctrine of the Alcoran is *the unity of God*, and the prophet propagated his religion by force of arms. Dean Prideaux hath largely proved in his letter to the Deists of the present age, that there are seven marks of an imposture, that these all belong to Mahometanism, and that not one of them can be charged on Christianity. See Sale's Alcoran, Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, Dr. White's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, and Dr. Toulmin's Dissertations on the Internal Evidence of Christianity, and on the Character of Christ compared with that of other founders of religion or philosophy.

Opinions

Opinions respecting the person of Christ, respecting the means and measure of God's favour, and respecting Church Government and the administration of ceremonies.

I.

OPINIONS RESPECTING THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

THE *Trinitarian* believes the doctrine of a Trinity, by which is generally understood, that there are three distinct persons in one undivided Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The word *Trinity* is not to be found in the Bible, but is a scholastic term, derived from the Latin word *Trinitas*, denoting a three-fold unity. The most learned writers entertain such various and contradictory sentiments respecting this mystery, that it is difficult to know to whom the term *Trinitarian* is justly applicable. Waterland, Howe, Sherlock, Pearson, Burnet, Beveridge, Wallis, and Watts, have each of them separate opinions on this subject. Dr. Priestley, however, thinks *Trinitarians* reducible to two classes: those who believe that there is no proper divinity in Christ, beside that of the Father, and the class of *Tritheists*, who maintain that there are three equal and distinct Gods. Nearly allied to this latter class,

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are the *Athanasians*, a name derived from Athanasius, a father of the christian church, who lived in the fourth century. The creed, which bears his name in the Common Prayer Book, is not of his composition, and so little attached was archbishop Tillotson to it, that in writing to Dr. Burnet, the historian, he says, " I wish we were well rid of it." The episcopal church in America have rejected it. Were the account of the doctrine of the Trinity contained in this creed ever so just and satisfactory, yet its *damnatory* clauses are highly exceptionable, and have given great offence to some of the more sensible and worthy members of the established church. It were well, if before we made up our mind on this intricate article of faith, we were carefully to read Dr. Watts's Essay on the importance of any human schemes to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. This essay shews first, that no such scheme of explication is necessary to salvation: 2d, that it may yet be of great use to the Christian church; and 3dly, that all such explications ought to be proposed with modesty to the world, and never imposed on the conscience.*

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* Bishop Burnet tells us that before the reformation it was usual in England to have pictures of the Trinity. God the Father was generally

The *Sabellian* reduces the three persons in the Trinity to three characters or relations. This has been called by some a *modal* Trinity, and the persons who hold it *Modalists*. Sabellius, the founder of this sect, espoused the doctrine in the third century. Of his tenets, the accounts are various. Some say he taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were one subsistence, and one person, with three names; and that in the Old Testament the Deity delivered the law as Father, in the New Testament, dwelt among men as the Son, and descended on the apostles as the Holy Spirit. This opinion gains ground in the principality of Wales. Between the system of Sabellianism, and what is termed the *Indwelling* scheme, there appears to be

generally represented in the shape of an old man with a triple crown, and rays about his head! The Son in another part of the picture looked like a young man with a single crown on his head, and a radiant countenance. The blessed Virgin was between them in a sitting posture, and the Holy Ghost under the appearance of a dove spread his wings over her. This picture he tells us is still to be seen in a prayer book printed in the year 1526, according to the ceremonial of Salisbury. Skippon also tells us there is at Padua a representation of the Trinity, being the figure of an old man with three faces and three beards. See Broughton's history of all religions, 2 vol. fol. article Trinity. How contrary are these absurd representations of the Deity to the sublime declaration of our Saviour in John iv. 24. *God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

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a great resemblance, if it be not precisely the same, differently explained. The *Indwelling* scheme is chiefly founded on that passage in the New Testament, where the Apostle speaking of Christ says — *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Dr. Watts, towards the close of his life, became a Sabellian, and wrote several pieces in defence of it. His sentiments on the Trinity appear to have been that “ the Godhead, the Deity itself, personally distinguished as the Father, was united to the man Christ Jesus, in consequence of which union or *indwelling* of the Godhead he became properly God.” Mr. Palmer, in his useful edition of Johnson’s Life of Watts, observes that Dr. Watts conceived this union to have subsisted before the Saviour’s appearance in the flesh, and that the human soul of Christ existed with the Father from before the foundation of the world, on which ground he maintains the real descent of Christ from heaven to earth, and the whole scene of his humiliation, which he thought incompatible with the common opinion concerning him. Dr. Doddridge is supposed to have been of these sentiments, and also Mr. Benjamin Fawcett of Kidderminster, who published a valuable piece entitled, *Candid Reflections concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

The *Arian* derives his name from *Arius*, a Presbyter of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 315, and the propagation of whose doctrine occasioned the famous council of Nice, assembled by Constantine in the year 325. Arius owned Christ to be God in a subordinate sense, and considered his death to be a propitiation for sin. The Arians acknowledge that the Son was the *word*, though they deny its being eternal; contending, that it had only been created prior to all other beings. Christ, say they, had nothing of man in him except the flesh, with which the *λογος*, or *word*, spoken of by the Apostle John, was united, which supplied the rest. In modern times the term Arian is indiscriminately applied to those who consider Jesus simply subordinate to the Father. Some of them believe Christ to have been the creator of the world; but they ALL maintain that he existed previous to his incarnation, though in his pre-existent state they assign him different degrees of dignity. Hence the appellations High and Low Arian. That valuable practical writer Mr. Job Orton, though he never published any thing explicitly on the Trinity, is generally supposed during the latter period of his life to have entertained these sentiments of the person of Christ. He used to recommend the two following tracts, as
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having given him the most satisfaction on the subject; *A Sober and Charitable Disquisition on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, by Simon Brown, and *An Essay towards a Demonstration of the Scripture Trinity*, by Dr. Scott. Of the system of Arianism, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Price, Mr. Taylor, author of Ben Mordecai's Apology, Mr. Tomkins, once a dissenting minister at Stoke Newington, and Mr. Hopkins, author of the Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian people, have been deemed the most able advocates. Mr. Whiston, the famous astronomer and translator of Josephus, revived this controversy in the beginning of the present century. Soon after Dr. Clarke published his celebrated treatise, entitled, "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity," which was disapproved of by the convocation, and answered by Dr. Waterland, who has been charged with verging towards *Tritheism*. Thomas Emlyn, a pious and learned divine, should be mentioned here, since he has been rendered memorable for his sufferings in the cause of Arianism. He was a dissenting minister in Dublin, and there sorely persecuted on account of his religious sentiments. He rejected the common notion of a Trinity, but firmly maintained the pre-existence of Christ.

He died in London 1741, and his works were published by his son, an eminent counsellor, in three volumes, to which are prefixed Memoirs of the Author. Some few Arians and most of the present Socinians add to their creed the doctrines of necessity, materialism and universal restoration, though these tenets are by no means peculiar to them. Towards the close of this sketch will be found an explanation of Universal Restoration, and some little account shall be here given of Necessity and Materialism.

The doctrine of *necessity* regards the origin of human actions and the specific mode of the divine government. Much controversy has there been on this abstruse subject. Collins, Priestley, Palmer, Price, Gregory and Crombie, are authors who are distinguished in the controversy. The opponents of *necessity* strenuously maintain that it destroys all virtue and vice, whilst its advocates declare it to be the most consistent mode of explaining the divine government. The doctrine of *Materialism* respects the nature of the human soul, and the peculiar mode of its existence. All materialists deny an intermediate state of consciousness between death and the resurrection. Price and Priestley had a friendly correspondence on this article, and though Price was no materialist, yet he

he did not hold with an intermediate state. Those who deny the existence of an intermediate state are often called *Soul-sleepers*. See Archdeacon Blackburn's Historical View of this Controversy, and Dr. Law's Appendix to his Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion. The Light of Nature Pursued, by Edward Search, Esq; is a very curious work relative to this subject. It contains ingenious illustrations, and the author's real name was Tucker, who died in 1775. Had not *necessity and materialism* been more of a philosophical than of a theological nature, they should have received a minuter explication.

The *Socinian* takes his name from *Faustus Socinus*, who died in Poland 1604. There were two who bore the name Socinus, uncle and nephew, and both disseminated the same doctrine. The Socinian asserts, that Christ had no existence until born of the Virgin Mary, and that, being a man like ourselves, though endowed with a large portion of the divine wisdom, the only objects of his mission were to teach the efficacy of repentance without an atonement, as a medium of the divine favour—to exhibit an example for our imitation; to seal his doctrine with his blood; and, in his resurrection from the dead, to indicate the certainty of our resurrection at the last day.

Between ancient and modern Socinians, however, a considerable difference obtains. The miraculous conception and the worship of Christ, both allowed by Socinus, are rejected by most of the modern Socinians. Dr. Priestley distinguished himself in a controversy on this subject with Dr. Horsley, the present Bishop of Rochester. Priestley had published his two principal theological works; the one to prove the first Christians Unitarians, entitled, *The History of Early Opinions*; the other to account for the origin and spread of what is commonly called the orthodox doctrine, entitled, *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. On one or both of these publications the Bishop severely animadverted, and to these animadversions Priestley made several spirited replies. It is difficult to trace the origin of the Socinian controversy. John Campanus is said, to be the first of the reformers who distinguished himself on this side of the question. Next Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, whom Calvin persecuted even to the death, for in the year 1553, he was committed to the flames by persons who had themselves just escaped the fangs of the Romish church, and who at least had nominally erected the standard of religious liberty. The Socinians flourished greatly in Poland about 1551, and J. Siemienius, palatine of Podolia, built purposely

purposely for their use the city of Racow. A famous catechism was published by them called the Racovian Catechism; and their most able writers are known among the learned by the title of the *Polones Fratres*, or Polonian Brethren. Having mentioned the persecution of Servetus by Calvin, truth, on the other hand, requires it to be mentioned that Socinus has been accused of persecuting one Francis David, who on account of his rejecting the worship of Christ, was cast into prison, where he died. The persecuting spirit, discoverable in some of the reformers, diminishes the respectability of their characters, and the only apology that can be made for them is, that the nature and foundation of religious liberty were not then fully understood. On account of the Socinians maintaining the *simple humanity* of Christ, they have sometimes been called *Humanitarians*.

But the Socinians have appropriated to themselves the appellation of *Unitarians*, and by this name they are now more generally distinguished. Though to this appellation they have no *exclusive* claim, yet it is somewhat more correctly descriptive of their religious tenets than that of *Socinians*, since they renounce many of the opinions of Socinus. The Arians, if not the Trinitarians, are equally strenuous for the divine Unity. See Lindsey's
Historical

Historical View of Unitarianism, Toulmin's Life of Socinus, and Hopton Haine's Scripture Account of the Attributes and Worship of God, and of the Character and Offices of Jesus Christ.

The Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians, have also differed greatly respecting the *personality* of the Holy Spirit. Much has been said on both sides of this intricate and controverted question. Dr. Lardner's letter on the Logos may be consulted, and also Mr. Marsom's little piece, entitled, the Impersonality of the Holy Ghost, published in 1787. In Doddridge's Lectures much information is given respecting this and almost every other article of the Christian faith. Dr. Kippis hath just published an edition of this valuable work, with considerable additions and improvements. The private Christian as well as the theological student, will derive an extensive knowledge from the attentive perusal of it.

II.

OPINIONS RESPECTING THE MEANS AND MEASURE OF GOD'S FAVOR.

THE *Calvinist* adheres to the doctrines which Calvin taught at Geneva, about 1540. The tenets of *Calvinism* are predestination, original sin, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the persever-

perseverance of the saints. These, in the learned world, are termed *the five points*, and frequent have been the controversies agitated respecting them. As the Calvinists differ among themselves in the explication of these tenets, it would be difficult to give a specific account of them. Generally speaking, however, they comprehend the following propositions: 1st. That God has chosen a certain number in Christ to everlasting glory, before the foundation of the world, according to his immutable purpose, and of his free grace and love, without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind he was pleased to pass by, and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his vindictive justice. 2dly. That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement only for the sins of the elect. 3dly. That mankind are totally depraved in consequence of the fall, and by virtue of Adam's being their public head the guilt of his sin was imputed, and a corrupt nature conveyed to all his posterity, from which proceed all actual transgressions; and that by sin we are made subject to death, and all miseries temporal, spiritual, and eternal. 4thly. That all whom God has *predestinated* to life he is pleased in his appointed time effectually to call by his

word

word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ;—and, 5thly, That those whom God has effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit shall never finally fall from a state of grace. Some have supposed that the Trinity was one of these five points; but this is a mistake, since both the Calvinists and the Arminians, who formed the synod of Dort (where this phrase *five points* originated) were on the article of the Trinity generally agreed.

The most prominent feature of this system is the election of some, and the reprobation of others, from all eternity. To the Calvinists also belongs more particularly the doctrine of an atonement, or that Christ, by his death, made a satisfaction to the divine justice for the elect. This doctrine, however, is differently explained by their divines, and some consider it (with the Arians and Sabellians) as simply a medium through which God has been pleased to exercise mercy towards the penitent. See Mr. Andrew Fuller's publication entitled *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared*, Letter 7th, page 117. 2nd edit.

But to ascertain the real sentiments of this body of Christians, recourse should be had to the Assembly's

sembly's Catechism, which is taught their children, and may therefore be supposed to contain a just account of their religious opinions.

Among the refinements of Calvinism are to be ranked the distinctions of the *sublapsarians* and *supralapsarians*. The *sublapsarians* assert, that God had only permitted the first man to fall into transgression, without absolutely predetermining his fall: whereas the *supralapsarians* maintain, that God had from all eternity decreed the transgression of Adam, in such a manner that our first parents could not possibly avoid this fatal event.

Calvin, amongst other productions, published his Institutes, in which he states and defends the principles of his system. It is written in elegant Latin, and dedicated to Francis the First, King of France.

For a defence of Calvinism, see Edwards on the Will: Brine's Tracts; Dr. Gill's performance, entitled, "The Cause of God and Truth;" and Toplady's Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England.

The *Arminian* favours the tenets of Arminius, the disciple of Beza, and latterly an eminent professor of divinity at Leyden, who flourished about the year 1600. His tenets include the five
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following propositions: 1st. That God has not fixed the future state of mankind by an absolute unconditional decree; but determined from all eternity, to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere to the end in their faith in Jesus Christ, and to inflict punishments on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist to the end his divine assistance. 2dly. That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that however none but those who believe in him can be partakers of this divine benefit. 3dly. That mankind are not totally depraved, and that depravity does not come upon them by virtue of Adam's being their public head, but that mortality and natural evil only are the direct consequences of his sin to posterity. 4thly. That there is no such thing as irresistible grace in the conversion of sinners;—and, 5thly. That those who are united to Christ by faith, may fall from their faith, and forfeit finally their state of grace. Thus the followers of Arminius believe that God, having an *equal* regard for all his creatures, sent his Son to die for the sins of the *whole world*; that men have the power of doing the will of God, otherwise they are not the proper subjects of approbation and

and condemnation; and that, in this present imperfect state, believers, if not peculiarly vigilant, may, through the force of temptation, fall from grace, and sink into final perdition.

Whitby, the celebrated commentator, has written a large and elaborate defence of Arminianism; and the reader should consult Dr. Taylor's Key to the Epistle to the Romans, which has been much admired, on the subject. Since the days of Laud (who was archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Charles the First) by far the majority of the English clergy have taken this side of the question. Bishop Burnet has given a full account of the opinions of this sect in his Exposition of the Seventeenth article.

In the last century disputes ran very high in Holland between the Calvinists and the Arminians. On each side considerable talents and learning were displayed, but some injudiciously called in the interference of the civil power, and thus terminated a controversy, which for some years had agitated the religious world. For this purpose the famous synod of Dort was held, 1618, and a curious account of its proceedings may be seen in a series of letters written by the ever memorable John Hales, who was present on the occasion. This synod was succeeded by a very severe and

shameful persecution of the Arminians. The respectable Barneveldt lost his head on a scaffold, and the learned Grotius, being condemned to perpetual imprisonment, fled and took refuge in France. The storm, however, some time after abated, and Episcopius, an Arminian minister, opened a seminary in Amsterdam, which produced some able divines and excellent scholars. The Arminians are sometimes called the *Remonstrants*, because they, in 1611, presented a remonstrance to the States General, wherein they pathetically state their grievances, and pray for relief. See an interesting work, entitled, an Abridgement of Gerard Brandt's History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, 2 vol. 8vo.

The *Baxterian* strikes into a middle path, between Arminianism and Calvinism, and thus endeavours to unite both schemes. With the Calvinist, he professes to believe that a certain number, determined upon in the divine councils, will be infallibly saved; and with the Arminian he joins in rejecting the doctrine of reprobation as absurd and impious; admits that Christ, in a certain sense, died for all, and supposes that such a portion of grace is allotted to every man, as renders it his own fault if he doth not attain to eternal life. This conciliatory system was espoused by the famous non-

nonconformist, Richard Baxter, who lived in the last century, and who was equally celebrated for the acuteness of his controversial talents and the utility of his practical writings. Hence came the term Baxterians, among whom are generally ranked both Watts and Doddridge. In the scale of religious sentiment Baxterianism seems to be with respect to the subject of the divine favour, what Arianism is, with respect to the person of Christ. It appears to have been considered by some pious persons as a safe middle way, between what they imagined to be two extremes.*

The *Antinomian* derives his name from two Greek words *anti* against, and *nomos* a law; his favourite tenet being, that the law is not a rule of life to believers. It is not easy to ascertain what he means by this position. But he seems to carry the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of salvation by faith without works, to such lengths as to injure, if not wholly destroy, the very obligation to moral obedience. Antino-

* For the particular detail given of the Calvinistic and Arminian sentiments, see a brief but useful history of the Christian church, in 2 vol. by Dr. Gregory. The best and amplest ecclesiastical history is Mosheim's, in 6 vol. translated from the Latin into English by Dr. MacLaine of the Hague, who has enriched it with many valuable notes.

mianism may be traced to the period of the reformation, and its founder was John Agricola, originally a disciple of Luther. The Papists, in their disputes with the Protestants of that day, carried the merit of good works to an extravagant length, and this induced some of their opponents to run into the opposite extreme. The late Reverend Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire, published *Four Checks to Antinomianism*, which have been much read and greatly admired. The term *Antinomian* has been frequently fixed on persons by way of reproach, and therefore many who have been branded with this name have repelled the charge. But Dr. Crisp, in his writings, and a few other divines of a similar cast, seem to defend this system of doctrine.

III.

OPINIONS RESPECTING CHURCH GOVERNMENT, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF CEREMONIES.

THE *Papists* are so denominated from their leading tenet—the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope (in the Latin, *Papa*, signifying father) which they strenuously maintain. By the *infallibility* of the Pope is understood that the
Pope

Pope cannot err in ecclesiastical matters, and by his *supremacy* is meant his authority over all the churches, and sometimes over all the princes of the earth. This enormous power has been for some time diminishing, and the Roman Catholics at present are much divided on the subject. Some allow the Pope's infallibility and supremacy in their full extent, others acknowledge them in part, and a third wholly reject them. The letters of Pope Ganganelli (who was called the Protestant Pope) are curious, and contain passages illustrative of this subject. Father O'Leary's tracts also may be consulted, who had a dispute on Popery with the Reverend John Wesley. They also profess to believe, 1. In seven sacraments—baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, or the anointing the sick in the prospect of death, orders, and matrimony. With respect to the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, they hold the doctrine of transubstantiation, or that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ; the paying divine worship to the host or consecrated wafer, and the allowing communion only in one kind, viz. bread to the laity. 2. In works of supererogation, or that the good works of saints are meritorious enough to supply the deficiency of others. 3. In

the celibacy of the clergy. 4. In the worship of images and sacred relics. And, 5. In the celebration of divine service in an unknown tongue: Many, however, of the adherents of Popery, in the present day, reject some of the above tenets, and more especially renouncing the supremacy of the Pope, distinguish themselves by the name of *Catholics*, and sometimes of *Catholic Dissenters*. The publications of Dr. Geddes, so far as they relate to the subject, are worthy of attention. He is a liberal and learned priest amongst this class of the Roman Catholics, and is engaged in a translation of the Bible under the patronage of Lord Petre. Among the Roman Catholics there are to be found several monastic orders, such as the Augustines, the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, &c. and also a variety of sects, such as the Jesuits, the Jansenists, the Molinists, and others, some of whom were sects of considerable celebrity.—The celebrated Pascal, in his *Provincial Letters*, aimed an effective blow at the order of the Jesuits, and it was abolished in France in 1762, on the supposition that they adopted practices which were inimical to the welfare of their country. In the council of Trent, held 1549, the tenets of the Papists were reduced into one compact standard, and the summary of Popery

pery, exhibited in Pope Pius's creed, contains the substance of the decrees and canons of this council. The creed is divided into 24 articles. The first twelve are expressed in the very words of the creed called the *Nicene*, and the remaining twelve are new articles, truly Romish. See Burroughs's View of Popery, taken from the Creed of Pope Pius the 14th, 1735. Father Paul of Venice has immortalized himself by a faithful history of the council of Trent, and though himself a Papist, yet he has exposed with freedom the intrigues by which this council was conducted. Bellarmine, an acute Jesuit, and Bossuet, the bishop of Meaux, are the two most celebrated defenders of Popery. They had also amongst them several eloquent preachers; and the sermons of Massilon, Bourdaloue and Flechier, are esteemed models of pulpit eloquence. In this country several penal laws were in force against the Roman Catholics, but most of them were repealed in the course of the present reign. It was an opposition to the repeal of these laws that occasioned the disgraceful riots, which, in the year 1780, threatened the destruction of the metropolis.

Here the account of Popery should have ended, had not their doctrine of *Indulgences* deserved particular explication. The history and form of these

these indulgences are given us by that eminent historian Dr. Robertson, in his history of Charles the Fifth, and are here transcribed for the instruction and entertainment of the reader. "According to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which were necessary towards their own justification, are deposited together, with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St. Peter, and to his successors the Popes, who may open it at pleasure, and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person for a sum of money, may convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whom he is interested, from the pains of purgatory, which *indulgences* were first invented in the 11th century by Urban the second, as a recompence for those who went in person upon the meritorious enterprise (commonly called the *Crusades*) of conquering the holy land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier for that purpose, and in process of time were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the Pope. Julius the 2nd. had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards building the church of St. Peter at Rome,

and.

and as Leo the 10th was carrying on that magnificent and expensive fabric, his grant was founded on the same pretence."

The following is the *form* of these indulgences; " May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions and excesses, how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account, and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This was the form of absolution used by Tetzel, a Dominican friar, who in the 16th century

was

was appointed to sell these indulgences in Germany, which eventually brought about the reformation.

The Greek or Russian Church, which now spreads itself over the eastern parts of Europe, is very ancient, and bears a considerable resemblance to the church of Rome. Denying, however, the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope, they are in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople. Amongst other articles of belief, they are distinguished for these three: 1. The rejection of images; 2. The doctrine of consubstantiation, or the union of the body of Christ, with the sacramental element: 3. The administration of Baptism, by immersing the whole body in water.

The Russian, or Greek church, equals the Latin church in ceremonies and superstitious customs; some of which are thus described in *Chantreau's Travels into Russia*, just published.—

“ At the beginning of the year, the king's day is a singular festival, which the Russians call the benediction of waters. On the Neva, then frozen, there is raised for this ceremony, a kind of temple, of an octagonal figure, on the top of which is a St. John the Baptist, and the inside is decorated with pictures, representing the baptism of Jesus, his transfiguration, and some other parts of his life.

life. There your attention is drawn to an enormous *Holy Ghost*, appearing to descend from heaven, a decoration common to all the Greek churches, which introduce the Holy Ghost every where. In the middle of the sanctuary, is a square space, where the broken ice leaves a communication with the waters running below, and the rest is ornamented with rich tapestry. Around this temple there is erected a kind of gallery, which communicates with one of the windows of the imperial palace, at which the empress and her family come out to attend the ceremony, which begins as soon as the regiments of guards have taken post on the river. Then the archbishop, at the sound of the bells, and of the artillery of the fortress, comes out of the palace, and walks in procession, with all his clergy, to the little temple we have just mentioned. When arrived at the place where the ice is broken, he descends, by means of a ladder, to the side of the water. There he dips his cross three or four times, afterwards says some prayers, an orison to the great St. Nicholas, and the waters are then thought blessed. The prelate sprinkles the water on the company around him, and on the colours of all the regiments that happen to be at St. Petersburg. After this benediction, the archbishop retires;

tires; then the people crowd toward the hole, by which this prelate has blessed the waters. They drink of them with a holy avidity. Notwithstanding the cold, the mothers plunge their infants, and the old men their heads, into them. Every body makes it a duty to carry away some for the purification of their houses, and curing certain distempers, against which the good Russians pretend this holy water is a powerful specific. While every one proceeds to this useful provision, four popes, who are at the four corners of the sanctuary, sing a kind of litany, in which they rehearse all the titles of the empress, and to which the people answer by these words; *Pameloi-Bog*.—May God take pity on her.”

“ The Russians have a great number of abstinencies, or fasts, and among the rest four lents.”

“ The Greek priests have much more reverence and meditation in their way of going through divine service, than the Latin priests; and the discipline of their church directs, that when once a priest is at the altar, he must not remove from it during the time he ought to stand there, whatever may happen him. For instance: we were told, that the prelate Gabriel, at present metropolitan of Novogorod, and archimandrite to St. Alexander Neuski, being one day engaged in saying mass at

St.

St. Petersburg, the house contiguous to the church took fire, and the flames reaching the steeple, Gabriel was warned of the danger he was in, and yet he stirred not, even although he was told a second time, that the bells would not be long in bruising him to atoms. As the cries of the multitude, conjuring him to remove from certain death, made no impresson on him, one of his relations leaped towards the altar, and tore him from it: Scarcely was he twenty paces from it, when the steeple fell in with a great crash upon the sanctuary."

Efforts have been made to join the *Greek* to the reformed church, but hitherto they have failed of success. The Rev. Dr. John King published an account of the doctrine, worship and discipline of the Greek church in Russia. There are several curious particulars to be found in the *Russian Catechism*, composed by the Czar, and which was published in London 1725, and also in *Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches*.

Under the appellation of *Protestants*, we include all who dissent from Popery, in whatever country they reside, or into whatever sects they have been since distributed. Abroad they are divided into two sorts, the *Lutherans*, who adhere to Luther's tenets; and the *Reformed*, who follow the

the discipline of Geneva. They were called Protestants, because in 1529, they *protested* against a decree of the emperor Charles the Fifth, and declared, that they appealed to a general council. At present, this vast class comprehends those whom Papists used contemptuously to stile *Hugonots* in France; the *Refugees* in Holland, who fled thither upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz, 1684; the *Presbyterians*, in Scotland; the *Episcopalians* and *Nonconformists* in England; together with a numerous body of Christians in America.

As the *Protestants* originated at the Reformation, it will be proper to give a brief account of this illustrious period of Ecclesiastical History.

For the three first centuries the religion of Jesus Christ stood on its own basis, was rapidly propagated among Jews and Gentiles, and suffered very severe persecutions from the Roman emperors. On the commencement of the 4th century, Constantine became a convert to Christianity, and incorporated it with the state. "It was not till the 5th or near the 6th century, that the bishop of Rome arrogantly assumed an illegal supremacy over his fellow pastors, and in process of time aimed at the secular government of princes as well as subjects. Though several emperors embraced and defended Christianity, yet the gradual decay of

of the Roman empire was a serious impediment to the rising preachers of the newly established religion. Those accomplishments which adorned the conquests of the Romans, and the perfection of science, which had dignified their state in such extent, were gradually swept away by the barbarous nations which defeated them, and the close of the 6th century could not trace a vestige of that exalted nation's government or it's laws. Between 4 and 500 years was the glorious luminary of the gospel eclipsed by the dismal return of ignorance and of superstition.* To these dark ages (as they are by some justly termed, and by others called *the night of time*,) is to be attributed the doctrine of indulgences, partial absolution, transubstantiation, the creation and worship of saints, purgatory, monastic seclusion, &c. So swift was the extinction of knowledge, and its revival so impeded, that persons of the greatest eminence in point of station could scarcely read or write. The clergy themselves, who engrossed what little science was remaining, could scarcely translate the Liturgy, and when ordained, were expressly obliged to affirm that they could read the Gospels and Epistles, and explain them."

"The

* The *Crusades*, commonly called the *holy wars*, were expeditions undertaken by the Papists to drive the Turks from Palestine, or the land

“ The REFORMATION was effected in the 16th century, by the pious labours and unwearied studies of those bright characters Erasmus, Luther, Huss, Jerome of Prague, &c. and as it should seem the particular act of Providence to facilitate their labours, and extend their influence, we find but half a century before the days of LUTHER the science of printing was discovered, and not long before that of the making of paper.”

land of Judea, and thus to rescue the holy sepulchre out of the hands of Infidels. There were eight of these crusades, the first in the year 1096, the last in 1270, assisted by Prince Edward, afterwards Edward 1st, King of England. The number of lives lost in these Quixotic expeditions is incredible, and it will remain to future ages a matter of astonishment, how enthusiasm and superstition could so completely infatuate the human mind. An account of the Crusades is given in Robertson's *Charles the Fifth*, and in Hume's *History of England*.

The *Inquisition* was a tribunal erected by the Popes for the examination and punishment of heretics. It was founded in the 12th century by Father Dominic and his followers, who were sent by Pope Innocent the Third, to enquire into the number and quality of heretics, and then to send an account to Rome. Hence they were termed *Inquisitors*, and their court the *Inquisition*. This infernal court was established in all Italy, and the dominions of Spain, except Naples and the Low Countries. Its cruelties were shocking beyond description, and were only one half of the bloody tale true, yet even then there is sufficient to freeze you with horror. See Dr. Chandler's *History of the Inquisition*, which is full of interesting information on the subject.

This

This indefatigable reformer, having the way somewhat cleared for him by Erasmus, had the happiness to discover a copy of the Bible in the neglected library of his monastery. From so valuable a discovery the talents and application of this great man were called forth into more than ordinary exercise: and he quickly drew aside the veil which had concealed the rooted errors and abominations of priesthood, and exposed the craft and artifice which had deluded the disciples, and disgraced the doctrine of the cross. Unawed by persecution, he proceeded coolly to examine into the several pretensions and inventions of the church of Rome, and overthrew them. He asserted and proved, that monastic retirement, if not contrary to, was no where required by the laws of God: and proposed to the Elector of Saxony, by whose permission he reformed the several churches within his dominions, to expel all abbots and monks, and to convert the convents of mendicant friars into public schools and hospitals. He proceeded to expose all the absurdities and superstitions of the Romish church, and had the satisfaction to see his cause prevail.*

Birch's Consilia.

Dr.

* “ Martin Luther's life (says Bishop Atterbury, in his epistolary correspondence) was a continual warfare; he was engaged against

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Dr. Robertson also observes, " It was from causes seemingly fortuitous, and from a source very inconsiderable, that all the mighty effects of the reformation flowed. Leo the Tenth, when raised to the papal throne, found the revenues of the church exhausted by the vast projects of his two ambitious predecessors, Alexander the Sixth, and

the united forces of the papal world, and he stood the shock of them bravely, both with courage and success. He was a man certainly of high endowments of mind, and great virtues: he had a vast understanding, which raised him up to a pitch of learning unknown to the age in which he lived; his knowledge in scripture was admirable, his elocution manly, and his way of reasoning with all the subtilty that those plain truths he delivered would bear; his thoughts were bent always on great designs, and he had a resolution fitted to go through with them; the assurance of his mind was not to be shaken or surprized, and his self possession before the diet of Worms, was such as might have become the days of the apostles. His life was holy, and when he had leisure for retirement severe: his virtues active chiefly, not those lazy sullen ones of the cloyster. He had no ambition but in the service of God: for other things neither his enjoyment or wishes ever went higher than the bare conveniences of living. He was of a temper particularly averse to covetousness, or any base sin, and charitable even to a fault, without respect to his own occasions. If among this crowd of virtues a failing crept in, we must remember that an apostle himself had not been irreprovable: if in the body of his doctrine one flaw is to be seen; yet the greatest lights of the church, and in the purest times of it, were, we know, not exact in all their opinions. Upon the whole we have certainly great reason to break out in the phrase of the prophet and say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings!*"

Julius

Julius the second. His own temper, naturally liberal and enterprizing, rendered him incapable of that severe and patient economy which the situation of his finances required. On the contrary, his schemes for aggrandizing the family of Medici, his love of splendor, his taste for pleasure, and his magnificence in rewarding men of genius, involved him daily in new expences; in order to provide a fund for which he tried every device that the fertile invention of priests had fallen upon to drain the credulous multitude. Among others he had recourse to a sale of indulgences. The right of promulgating these indulgences in Germany, together with a share in the profits arising from the sale of them, was granted to Albert, Elector of Metz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, who, as his chief agent for retailing them in Saxony, employed Tetzel, a Dominican friar, of licentious morals, but of an active spirit, and remarkable for his noisy and popular eloquence. He, assisted by the monks of his order, executed the commission with great zeal and success, but with little discretion or decency, and though by magnifying excessively the benefit of their indulgences, and by disposing of them at a very low price, they carried on for some time an extensive and lucrative traffic among the credulous multitude,

tude, the extravagance of their assertions, as well as the irregularities in their conduct, came at last to give general offence. The princes and nobles were irritated at seeing their vassals drained of so much wealth, in order to replenish the treasury of a profuse Pontiff. Men of piety regretted the delusion of the people, who, being taught to rely for the pardon of their sins on the indulgences which they purchased, did not think it incumbent on them either to abound in faith or to practise holiness. Even the most unthinking were shocked at the scandalous behaviour of Tetzels and his associates, who often squandered in drunkenness, gaming, and low debauchery, those sums which were piously bestowed, in hopes of obtaining eternal happiness; and *all* began to wish that some check were given to this commerce, no less detrimental to society than destructive to religion."

"The corrupt state of the church prior to the reformation is acknowledged by an author who was both abundantly able to judge concerning this matter, and who was not over forward to confess it." "For some years (says Bellarmine) before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not (as cotemporary authors testify) any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories, any discipline with regard to morals, any knowledge
of

of sacred literature, any reverence for divine things, there was not almost any religion remaining." Such a remarkable confession made by the avowed champion of popery, should not pass unnoticed by Protestants; and before the enemies of Protestantism inveigh against the reformation, let them consider its absolute necessity, and contemplate the innumerable advantages with which it was attended.*

Chillingworth, addressing himself to a Romish writer, speaks of *the religion of Protestants* in the following terms, worthy to be inscribed in letters of gold. " Know then, Sir, that when I say *the religion of Protestants* is in prudence to be preferred

* The *profelyting* spirit of the Romish religion is proverbial. The above account of the Reformation is therefore designed to counteract the spread of Popery, which no doubt some of the French priests are attempting, who have of late been so plentifully imported into this country. No one pities their *exiled* situation more than the writer of this Sketch, but he should be sorry if (like Dr. Horsley) his commiseration should get the better of his *Protestantism*, and induce him to seem to approve of a religion (which to say the least) is certainly in the opinion of all Protestants the grossest corruption of Christianity. The Roman Catholics in England, however, are in general more intelligent and liberal than they were in former days. Many of them, like Dr. Geddes and Mr. Berrington, both priests of that persuasion, are possessed of a degree of knowledge, and inspired with a measure of candor and moderation unknown to their ancestors.

before

before yours, as on the one side I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of *Bellarmino* or *Baronius*, or any other private man amongst you, nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree, *The doctrine of the council of Trent*: So accordingly on the other side by the religion of *Protestants*, I do not understand the doctrine of *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Melancthon*, nor the confession of *Augusta*, or *Geneva*, nor the *Catechism of Heidelberg*, nor the articles of the *Church of England*, no, nor the harmony of *Protestant confessions*; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of faith and action, that is THE BIBLE. The Bible, I say the Bible only is the religion of *Protestants*. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion; but as a matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness,

do

do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this ROCK only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, and councils against councils, some fathers against other fathers, the same fathers against themselves; a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age: traditive interpretations of scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found: no tradition but that of scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after *Christ*, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word there is no sufficient certainty but of scripture only for any *considering* man to build upon. This therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe. This I will profess: according to this, I will live, and for this if there be occasion I will not only willingly but even gladly lose my life, though I should be sorry that *Christians* should take it from me.

“ Propose me any thing out of this book, and require whether I believe or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this, *God hath said so, therefore it is true.* In other things I will
take

take no man's liberty of judging from him ; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse *man*, nor the worse *Christian*, I will love no man the less for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God *does* not, and therefore men *ought* not, to require any more of any man than this : "*To believe the scripture to be God's word ; to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it.*"* Chillingworth's works, fol. edit. 1742.

It

* Our English translation of the Bible was made in the time and by the appointment of James the First. According to Fuller, the list of the translators amounts to forty-seven. This number was ranged under six divisions, and several parcels of the Bible assigned them. Every one of the company was to translate the whole parcel, then they were to compare these together, and when any company had finished their part they were to communicate it to the other companies, so that nothing should pass without general consent. The names of the persons and places where they met, together with the portions of scripture assigned each company, are to be found in *Johnson's historical account of the several translations of the Bible*. These good and learned men entered on their work in the spring 1607, and three years elapsed before the translation was finished.

From the mutability of language, the variation of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages in the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected. Hence in the present age, when biblical literature has been assiduously cultivated, different parts of the sacred volume have been translated by very able hands.

It may be proper to add, that Chillingworth was a learned divine of the Church of England, and lived in the reign of Charles the First. In the earlier part of life he embraced the Romish religion, but having found, after the most impartial investigation, that it was false and inconclusive, he returned to the communion of the Church of England, and vindicated the Protestant religion, in a work entitled, "The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation." Many curious particulars respecting Popery will be found in the *Romish Ecclesiastical History of late years*, by Richard Steele, Esq. in *Geddes's Tracts*, and in *Bowyer's History of the Popes*.

The appellation *Hugonots* was given to the French Protestants in 1561. The term is (by some) supposed to be derived from a gate in Tours, called *Hugon*, where they first assembled. According to the hands. The substituting a new translation of the Bible in the room of the one now in common use, has been much debated. Dr. Knox, in his ingenious essays, together with others, argue against it, whilst Dr. Newcombe, Lord Pilmate of Ireland, Dr. Geddes, of the Catholic persuasion, and the Reverend Gilbert Wakefield, contend strenuously for it. The correction of several passages, however, would deprive Deists of many of their objections; prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions; and be the means of making the scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world in general.

according to others the name is taken from the first words of their original protest or confession of faith; *Huc nos venimus, &c.* During the reign of Charles the Ninth, and on the 24th of August, 1572, happened the massacre of Bartholomew, when 70,000 Protestants throughout France were butchered, with circumstances of aggravated cruelty. It begun at Paris in the night of the festival of Bartholomew, by secret orders from Charles the Ninth, at the instigation of his mother, the Queen Dowager Catherine de Medicis. See Sully's Memoirs, and also a fine description of it in the second canto of Voltaire's *Henriade*.

In 1598 Henry the Fourth passed the famous *edict of Nantz*, which secured to his old friends the Protestants the free exercise of their religion. This edict was revoked by Lewis the Fourteenth. Their churches were then erased to the ground; their persons insulted by the soldiery, and after the loss of innumerable lives, 50,000 valuable members of society were driven into exile. In Holland they built several places of worship, and had amongst them some distinguished preachers. Among others were Superville, Dumont, Dubosc, and the eloquent Saurin, five volumes of whose select sermons were translated into our language by the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. In one of these

these sermons Saurin makes the following fine apostrophe to that tyrant, Lewis the Fourteenth, by whom they were driven into exile. "And thou, dreadful prince, whom I once honoured as my king, and whom I yet respect as a scourge in the hand of Almighty God, thou also shalt have a part in my good wishes. These provinces, which thou threatenest, but which the arm of the Lord protects; this country, which thou fillest with refugees, but fugitives animated with love; these walls, which contain a thousand martyrs of thy making, but whom religion renders victorious, all these yet resound benedictions in thy favour. God grant, the fatal bandage that hides the truth from thine eyes may fall off! May God forget the rivers of blood with which thou hast deluged the earth, and which thy reign hath caused to be shed! May God blot out of his book the injuries which thou hast done us, and while he rewards the sufferers, may he pardon those who exposed us to suffer! O may God, who hath made thee to us, and to the whole church, a minister of his judgments, make thee a dispenser of his favours, an administrator of his mercy!"

About the time of the Revolution, 1688, there were many controversies between the Protestant and the Popish divines. Tillotson and Burnet,

two clergymen of the Church of England, rendered Protestantism great service by their writings; and it is conjectured, were on that account, elevated to the bench by King William of immortal memory. There are also two excellent volumes of sermons against Popery, preached in the early part of this century, by various dissenting ministers, at Salters Hall. Burnet's *History of the Reformation* and *The History of his Own Times*, published after his death by his son, are two works which throw much light on the state of religion in the last and preceding centuries among Papists, Churchmen, and Dissenters. The merit of these publications, particularly of the latter, is judiciously appreciated by Dr. Kippis, under the article *Burnet*, in the *Biographia Britannica*.

The *Episcopalians* in the modern acceptation of the term, belong more especially to the Church of England, and derive this title from *Episcopus*, the Latin word for bishop. They insist on the divine origin of their bishops, and other church officers, and on the alliance between church and state. Respecting these subjects, however, Warburton and Hoadley, together with others of the learned amongst them, have different opinions, as they also have on their thirty-nine articles; which were established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

They

They are to be found in most Common-Prayer books; and the Episcopal church in America has reduced their number to twenty. By some, these articles are made to speak the language of Calvinism, and by others have been interpreted in favour of Arminianism. The doctrines and discipline of the church of England are nearly connected with the reformation of Luther in Germany, and also with the state of ecclesiastical affairs for a considerable time before that reformation commenced.

Eusebius positively asserts that Christianity was first introduced into South Britain by the apostles and their disciples, and it is supposed that the apostle Paul visited this country, whose zeal, diligence, and fortitude, were abundant. It is also said that numbers of persons professed the Christian faith here about the year 150, and according to Usher, there was in the year 182, a school of learning, to provide the British churches with proper teachers. John Wickliff, educated at Oxford in the reign of Edward the Third, was the first person who publicly questioned and boldly refuted the doctrines of Popery. He left behind him many followers, who were called *Wickliffites* and *Lollards*; the latter being a term of reproach taken from the Flemish tongue. In the council of Constance, 1415, the

memory and opinions of Wickliff (who died peaceably at Lutterworth, 1387) were condemned, and soon after his bones were dug up and burnt. This impotent rage of his enemies served only to promote the cause of reform which Wickliff had espoused. It is with a view to this subsequent extension of his doctrine that the judicious Rapin observes, "His ashes were thrown into the brook which runs through the town of Lutterworth, the brook conveyed the ashes to the Severn, and the Severn to the sea."

The Church of England broke off from the Romish church in the time of Henry the Eighth, when (as has been already related) Luther began the reformation in Germany.* In earlier life, and during the earlier part of his reign, Henry was a bigotted Papist, burnt William Tyndal, who

* We must not forget to mention the following generous action of Charles the Fifth, though he was the avowed enemy of Luther, and of the reformation which he effected. While Charles's troops were quartered at Wirtemberg in 1547, which was one year after Luther's death, a soldier gave Luther's effigies in the church of the castle two stabs with his dagger; and the Spaniards earnestly desired that his tomb might be pulled down, and his bones dug up and burnt: but the Emperor wisely answered, "I have nothing farther to do with Luther: he has henceforth another Judge, whose jurisdiction it is not lawful for me to usurp. Know that I make not war with the dead but with the living, who still make war with me."

who made one of the first and best English translations of the New Testament, and wrote fiercely in defence of the seven sacraments against Luther, for which the Pope honoured him with the title of *the Defender of the Faith*. This title is retained by the kings of England even to the present day, though they are the avowed enemies of those opinions, by contending for which he acquired that honourable distinction. Henry falling out with the Pope, took the government of ecclesiastical affairs into his own hands,* and having reformed many enormous abuses, entitled himself supreme

He would not therefore suffer his tomb to be demolished, and he forbade any attempt of that nature upon pain of death."

Towards the close of life this great emperor retired to a monastery, and in his retirement, we are told, "that he was particularly curious with regard to the construction of clocks and watches; and having found after repeated trials that he could not bring any two of them to go exactly alike, he reflected, it is said, with a mixture of surprise as well as regret, on his own folly, in having bestowed so much time and labour in the more vain attempt of bringing mankind to a precise uniformity of sentiment concerning the intricate and mysterious doctrines of religion."

* When the Reformation in England first took place, great efforts were made to promote the reading of the scriptures among the common people. Among other devices for the purpose, the following curious one was adopted. Bonner, Bishop of London, caused six bibles to be chained to certain convenient places in St. Paul's church, for all that were so well inclined to resort unto: together with
a certain

supreme head of the church. The church of England is governed by the king, who is the supreme head; by two archbishops, and by 24 bishops. The benefices of the bishops were converted by William the Conqueror into temporal baronies, so that every prelate has a seat and vote in the House of Peers. Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, however, in a sermon preached from this text, *my kingdom is not of this world*, insisted that the clergy had no pretensions to temporal jurisdictions, which gave rise to various publications, termed by way of eminence the *Bangorian Controversy*, for Hoadley was then bishop of Bangor. There is a bishop of Sodor and Man, who has no seat in the House of Peers; and a late prelate of this see was

a certain admonition to the readers fastened upon the pillars to which the bibles were chained, to this tenor; "That whosoever came there to read should prepare himself to be edified, and made the better thereby; that he bring with him discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence and quiet behaviour; that there should no such number meet together there as to make a multitude; that no such exposition be made thereupon but what is declared in the book itself; that it be not read with noise in time of divine service, or that any disputation or contention be used about it; that in case they continued their former misbehaviour, and refused to comply with these directions, the king would be forced against his will to remove the occasion, and take the bible out of the church."—See Johnson's *Historical Account of the several English Translations of the Bible*, and the opposition they met with from the Church of Rome.

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the amiable and learned Dr. Wilfon. Since the death of the pedantic and intolerant archbishop Laud, men of moderate principles have been raised to the see of Canterbury, and this hath tended not a little to the tranquility of church and state. The established church of Ireland is the same as the church of England, and is governed by four archbishops and 18 bishops. In the course of this century disputes have arisen among the English clergy respecting the propriety of subscribing to any human formulary of religious sentiments. An application for its removal was made to Parliament in 1772, by the petitioning clergy, and received, as it deserved, the most public discussion in the House of Commons. Many valuable publications appeared on the subject, especially the *Confessional* of Archdeacon Blackburn; and since that period, Dyer's Treatise on Subscription. So convinced were some of the clergy of the impropriety of subscription, that the Rev. Mr. Theophilus Lindsey, the Rev. Dr. Disney, and many others, resigned their livings, and published reasons for their conduct.

Several attempts have been made to amend the articles, the liturgy, and some things which related to the internal government of the church of England. Dr. Watson, the present bishop of Landaff,

Landaff, hath more lately written a letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, in which he argues for the propriety of a more equal distribution of salary among the different orders of the clergy. But this plan, projected by the worthy prelate, together with the preceding proposals for reform by the authors of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, and the *Appeal to Reason and Candor*, have been suffered to sink into oblivion. The church of England has produced a succession of eminent men. Among its ornaments are to be reckoned Usher, Hall, Taylor, Stillingfleet, Cudworth, Wilkins, Tillotson, Cumberland, Barrow, Burnet, Pearson, Hammond, Whithy, Clark, Hoadley, Jortin, Secker, Horne, Lowth, and Warburton. In the Appendix to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History will be found a circumstantial account of the correspondence carried on in the year 1718, between Dr. Wm. Wake, archbishop of Canterbury, and certain doctors of the Sorbonne of Paris, relative to a project of union between the English and Gallican churches.

In Scotland, and other parts, since the revolution, there existed a species of Episcopalians called *Non-jurors*, because being strongly attached to the *Stuarts*, who were then driven from the throne, they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the
Brunswick

Brunswick family. But on the decease of the Pretender, whom they stiled Prince Charles, and who died at Rome, 1788, they complied with the requisition of government, and now the distinction is abolished. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity—Pearson on the Creed, and Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, are deemed the best defences of episcopacy.*

* The reformation in England, begun under the auspices of Henry the Eighth, was greatly checked by Mary, who proceeded like a female fury to re-establish Popery. In her sanguinary reign were burnt to ashes one archbishop, 4 bishops, 21 divines, 8 gentlemen, 184 artificers, and 100 husbandmen, servants, and labourers, 26 wives, 20 widows, 9 virgins, 2 boys, and 2 infants. On the death of Mary, 1558, Elizabeth ascended the throne, repealed the laws which had been established in favour of Popery, and restored her supremacy. In these matters she wonderfully succeeded, since of 9400 beneficed clergymen, about 120 only refused to comply with the reformation. The establishment of Protestantism in England underwent various fluctuations till the glorious revolution under William, in 1688, placed it on a firm and permanent foundation. The family of the Stuarts were bitter enemies to the civil and religious liberties of their subjects, and violently attached to Popery. Dr. Goldsmith tells us, in his history of England, that James the Second, in endeavouring to convert his subjects to the Popish religion, descended so low as Colonel Kirke. But that daring and unprincipled soldier assured his majesty that he was pre-engaged, for that if ever he did change his religion, he had promised the Emperor of Morocco, when quartered at Tangiers, to turn *Mahometan*!

Dissenters

Dissenters from the church of England made their first appearance in Queen Elizabeth's times, when on account of the extraordinary purity which they proposed in religious worship and conduct, they were reproached with the name of *Puritans*. They were greatly increased by the act of uniformity, which took place on Bartholomew-day 1662, in the reign of Charles the Second. By this act 2000 conscientious ministers were obliged to quit the established church, whence they were called *Non-conformists*. An instructive and entertaining account of the lives, literature, and piety of these good men, is to be found in Palmer's *Non-conformist Memorial*. Their descendants are now known by the name of *Protestant Dissenters*, and rank under the three respectable denominations of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists. Of the origin and progress of the Dissenters, a full account is contained in Mr. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, an improved edition of which work is now publishing by Dr. Toulmin of Taunton, who accompanies it with notes, in which are obviated the objections which have been made to it by Grey, Maddox, Warburton, and others. Here the historian traces, step by step, the differences which originally occasioned the separation, and an affecting narrative is given of the sufferings which

which our forefathers were doomed to undergo in the cause of religious liberty. A brief history of the Puritans also was published in 1772, of which the author, the Rev. Mr. J. Cornish, will soon give an enlarged edition. Dr. Calamy's abridgement of Baxter's life is likewise a valuable publication on the subject. The principles on which the Dissenters separate from the church of England are the same with those on which she separates herself from the church of Rome. They may be summarily comprehended in these three; 1. The right of private judgment. 2. Liberty of Conscience, and 3. The perfection of scripture as a Christian's *only* rule of faith and practice.

The *Test Act* excludes Dissenters from filling public offices, except they take the sacrament at the established church, which some think cannot be consistently done by any conscientious Dissenter. Hence loud complaints have been raised respecting this exclusion, since, as members of the civil community, they are entitled to all the common privileges of that community. The Test Act was originally levelled against the Roman Catholics. The Dissenters have made several unsuccessful applications for its repeal. The question was warmly agitated in the House of Commons, and on each side numerous publications issued

from the press. The chief argument urged for the continuance of the Test Act is the safety of the established church. The principal arguments alledged for its repeal are, that it is a prostitution of the Lord's Supper, and that to withhold civil rights on account of religious opinions, is a species of persecution.

The Dissenters, as a body, have not been unfruitful of great and learned men. Among their ornaments are to be ranked Baxter, Bates, Howe, Owen, Williams, Neal, Henry, Stennett, Evans, Gale, Foster, Leland, Grovesnor, Watts, Lardner, Abernethy, Doddridge, Grove, Chandler, Gill, Orton, Furneaux, Farmer, Towgood, Robinson and Price. Though (as enemies have suggested) it may happen that among Dissenters sufficient encouragement is not given in certain cases to men of talents and integrity, yet among their more liberal denominations, it must be confessed that a dissenting minister may, unawed by a conclave of cardinals—a bench of bishops, or a board of ministers—exercise in its fullest extent *the right of private judgment*, which is the pride and pleasure of the human mind. In Peirce's Vindication of the Dissenters, Towgood's Letters to White, and Palmer's Protestant Dissenter's Catechism, are stated the grounds upon which dissent from the established church is founded.

The members of the *Kirk of Scotland* are strictly speaking the only *Presbyterians* in Great Britain. Their mode of ecclesiastical government was brought thither from Geneva by John Knox, the celebrated Scotch reformer, and who has been stiled the apostle of Scotland, for the same reason that Luther was called the apostle of Germany.* Contrary to the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians maintain that the church should be governed by Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies. The title Presbyterian comes from the Greek word *Πρεσβυτερος*, which signifies senior, or elder. In

* John Knox and Martin Luther bear a considerable resemblance to each other in their disposition and manners. Providence indeed seems to have raised them up for the vast work of the *reformation* which they effected. They may be ranked among those extraordinary characters of whom few speak with temper, some heaping upon them extravagant encomiums, and others loading them with senseless invectives. The dreadful news of the *massacre* of the Protestants at Paris is supposed to have hastened the death of John Knox, who having had just strength enough to preach against it, fell sick soon after, and died Nov. 24, 1572, after having spent several days in the utmost devotion. He was interred at Edinburgh, several lords attending, and particularly the earl of Moreton, that day chosen regent: who as soon as Knox was laid in the grave, said, "There lies a man who in his life never feared the face of a man, who hath been often threatened with dag and dagger, but yet hath ended his days in peace and honor. For he had God's providence watching over him in a special manner when his very life was sought."

the kirk of Scotland there are 15 synods and 69 presbyteries. Their doctrine is Calvinistic, and their general assembly is held annually in the month of May at Edinburgh. Dreadful scenes took place in Scotland previous to the final establishment of Presbyterianism in its present form at the revolution; and its confirmation in 1706, by the act of union between the two kingdoms. During the commonwealth Presbyterianism was the established religion, but on the restoration Episcopacy was introduced in its room. So averse, however, were the Scotch to the Episcopalians, and so harsh were the measures of the Episcopalian party, that the whole country was thrown into confusion. Leighton, the most pious and moderate prelate amongst them, disgusted with the proceedings of his brethren, resigned his bishopric, and told the king, "He would not have a hand in such oppressive measures, were he sure to plant the Christian religion in an infidel country by them; much less when they tended only to alter the form of church government." On the other hand, Sharp, archbishop of St. Andrew's, adopted violent measures, which terminated in his death. For in 1679, nine ruffians stopped his coach near St. Andrew's, assassinated him, and left his body covered with
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thirty-two wounds. On the monument of this unfortunate prelate, in one of the churches of St. Andrew's, there is an exact representation in elegant sculpture of this tragical event.*

It was in these troubled times that the Presbyterians drew up their famous *solemn league and covenant*, whereby they bound themselves to effect the extirpation of episcopacy. The Scotch church, however, is now considerably improved in sentiment and liberality, and some of their clergy stand foremost in the several departments of lite-

* Soon after the Restoration, when Episcopacy was introduced into Scotland, Leighton was consecrated bishop of Dunblane. At his entrance upon office he gave an early instance of moderation. Sharp, and the other bishops, intended to enter Edinburgh in a pompous manner. Leighton remonstrated against it. "How can these men," said Sharp, with his usual vehemence, "expect moderation from us, when they themselves imposed their covenant with so much zeal and tyranny on others!" "For that very reason," answered Leighton mildly, "let us treat them with gentleness, and *show* them the difference between their principles and ours."

In the distracted times of Cromwell this amiable man used to exhort his parishioners to live together in charity, and not to trouble themselves with religious and political disputes, an exhortation by no means unsuitable to the present times. It is therefore said of him, that when the ministers were called over yearly in the synod, it was commonly asked, "whether they had preached to the times?" "For God's sake," answered Leighton, "when *all* my brethren preach to the times, suffer *one* poor priest to preach about *Eternity*." See article Leighton, Biographical Dictionary, vol. 12.

ture. Robertson, Henry, Leechman, Blacklock, and Gerard, all recently deceased, are among its principal ornaments. In a selection of sermons, entitled, the *Scotch Preacher*, will be found a pleasing specimen of the pulpit compositions of the Scotch clergy, delivered on particular occasions in the course of the present century.

Dissenters from the Kirk or Church of Scotland, call themselves *Seceders*, for as the term *Dissenter* comes from the Latin word *dissentio*, to differ, so the appellation *Seceder* is derived from another Latin word *secedo*, to separate or to withdraw from any body of men with which we may have been united. The *Seceders* are rigid Calvinists, austere in their manners, and severe in their discipline. Through a difference as to civil matters they are broken down into *Burghers* and *Anti-burghers*. Of these two classes the latter are the most confined in their sentiments, and associate therefore the least with any other body of Christians. The *Seceders* originated under Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, about the year 1730. There is also a species of dissenters in Scotland called the *Relief*, whose only difference from the Scotch established church is the choosing their own pastors. It is worthy of observation, that the Rev. George Whitefield, in one of his visits to Scotland, was solemnly

solemnly anathemized by the *Seceders*, because he refused to confine his itinerant labors *wholly* to them.* See Whitefield's life by Dr. Gillies of Glasgow.

But

* The reformation in Scotland, like that in England and Germany, struggled with a long series of opposition, and was at length gloriously triumphant. Dr. Gilbert Stewart therefore, closes his history of this reformation in North Britain with the following animated reflections.

“ From the order and the laws of our nature it perpetually happens that advantages are mixed with misfortune. The conflicts which led to a purer religion, while they excite under one aspect the liveliest transports of joy, create in another a mournful sentiment of sympathy and compassion. Amidst the felicities which were obtained, and the trophies which were won, we deplore the melancholy ravages of the passions, and weep over the ruins of ancient magnificence. But while the contentions and the ferments of men, even in the road to improvements and excellence, are ever destined to be polluted with mischief and blood, a tribute of the highest panegyric and praise is yet justly to be paid to the actors in the reformation. They gave way to the movements of a liberal and a resolute spirit. They taught the rulers of nations that the obedience of the subject is the child of justice, and that men must be governed by their opinions and their reason. This magnanimity is illustrated by great and conspicuous exploits, which at the same time that they awaken admiration, are an example to support and animate virtue in the hour of trial and peril. The existence of civil liberty was deeply connected with the doctrines for which they contended and fought. While they treated with scorn an abject and a cruel superstition, and lifted and sublimed the dignity of man, by calling his attention to a simpler and a wiser theology, they were strenuous to give a permanent

But the appellation *Presbyterian* is in England appropriated to a large and respectable denomination of Dissenters, who have not any attachment to the Scotch mode of church government, any more than to Episcopacy amongst us, and therefore to this body of Christians the term Presbyterian in its original sense is very improperly applied. How this misapplication came to pass cannot be easily determined, but it has occasioned many wrong notions, and should therefore be rectified. English Presbyterians as they are called, adopt the same mode of church government with the Independents, which is the next sect to be mentioned. Their chief difference from the Independents is, that they are less attached to Calvinism, and consequently admit a greater latitude of religious sentiment.

The *Independents* or *Congregationalists*, deny not only the subordination of the clergy, but also all dependency on other assemblies. Every congrega-

permanent security to the political constitution of their state. The happiest and the best interests of society were the objects for which they buckled on their armour, and to wish and to act for their duration and stability, are perhaps the most important employments of patriotism and public affection. The reformation may suffer fluctuations in its forms, but for the good and the prosperity of mankind, it is to be hoped that it is never to yield and to submit to the errors and the superstitions it overwhelped."

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tion (say they) has in itself what is necessary for its own government, and is not subject to other churches or to their deputies. Thus this *independency* of one church with respect to another, has given rise to the appellation *Independents*; though this mode of church government is adopted by the Dissenters in general. The *Independents* have been improperly confounded with the *Brownists*, for though they may have originally sprung from them, they excel them in the moderation of their sentiments, and in the order of their discipline. The first Independent or Congregational Church in England, was established by a Mr. Jacob, in the year 1616; though a Mr. Robinson appears to have been the founder of this sect.

The *Brownists*, which have been just mentioned, were the followers of Robert Brown, a clergyman of the church of England, who lived about 1600. He inveighed against the ceremonies and discipline of the church, separated himself from her communion, and afterward returned into her bosom. He appears to have been a persecuted man, of violent passions. He died in Northampton goal, 1630, after boasting that he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, in some of which, he could not see his hand at noon day.

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The *Baptists* are distinguished from other denominations, respecting the *mode* and *subject* of baptism. They contend that this ordinance should be administered by immersion only, which indeed is enjoined, though not practised, by the church of England. They also assert, that it should be administered to those alone who profess their belief in the Christian religion, and their determination of regulating their lives by its precepts. Some of the learned, however, suppose that the controversy is not so properly, whether *infants* or *adults* should be baptized, as whether the rite should be administered on the profession of our *own* faith, or that of *another's* faith. See Letters written by the Rev. Mr. Foote, and addressed to Bishop Hoadley. The Baptists are divided into the *General*, who are Arminians, and into the *Particular*, who are Calvinists. Some of both classes allow mixed communion, by which is understood that those who have not been baptized by immersion, on the profession of their faith, may sit down at the Lord's table, along with those who have been thus baptized. This has given rise to some little controversy on the subject. Mr. Killingworth and Mr. Abraham Booth, have written against free communion, but Dr. Foster, Mr. Charles Bulkley, and the late Mr.

Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, have strenuously contended for it.

The *General Baptists* have, in some of their churches, three distinct orders, separately ordained — Messengers, Elders, and Deacons; and their General Assembly is held annually in Worship-street, London, on the Wednesday in the Whitsun-week. Those who baptize children are called *Pedobaptists*, a name derived from the Greek, and signifying baptizers of infants. Dr. Gale had a famous controversy, in the beginning of this century, with Dr. Wall, who defended the practice of sprinkling infants. But there has been a more recent controversy on the subject, between Mr. Abraham Booth, and Dr. Williams of Birmingham. The late Mr. Robert Robinson published a large and learned work, entitled, *The History of Baptism*. The appellation *Anabaptist*, which comes from two Greek words, and signifies to *re-baptize*, is sometimes applied to this denomination of Christians. But this is an unjust accusation brought against them by their adversaries, and being therefore deemed a term of reproach, ought to be wholly laid aside. Information respecting the Baptists at large, may be found in Dr. Rippon's Annual Register.

The three denominations of *Protestant Dissenters* have seminaries of their own, where young men designed for the Christian ministry are educated. Amongst the Presbyterians are to be reckoned the academies at Hackney, Northampton, Manchester, and Swansea, in South Wales, besides six exhibitions granted by Dr. Daniel Williams, to English Presbyterian students to be educated at Glasgow. Among the Independents are to be mentioned the academies at Homerton, Wrexham, Taunton, and Hoxton. There is also an academy of Lady Huntingdon's, formerly at Trevecka, now at Cheshunt. The Baptists have two exhibitions for students to be educated in Scotland, given them by Dr. Ward of Gresham College, and there is an academy at Bristol, generally known by the name of the Bristol Education Society. Since the decease of its late worthy and liberal president Dr. Caleb Evans, it has been thought proper to narrow the terms of admission on account of religious sentiment, so that it is now in contemplation to form a similar institution among the General Baptists. In Dr. Kippis's life of Dr. Doddridge, prefixed to the seventh edition of his *Family Expositor*, will be found an instructive and satisfactory account of the general mode of education for ministers among the Dissenters.

Mr.

Mr. Palmer, in his Non-conformist memorial, speaking of Dr. Daniel Williams, says, " He gave the bulk of his estate to charitable uses, as excellent in their nature as various in their kinds, and as much calculated for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, as any that have ever been known. He left his library for public use, and ordered a convenient place to be purchased or erected, in which the books might be properly disposed of, and left an annuity for a librarian. A commodious house was accordingly erected in *Redcross-street, Cripplegate*, where his collection of books is not only properly preserved, but has been gradually receiving large additions. This is also the place in which the body of dissenting ministers meet to transact their business, and is a kind of repository for paintings of non-conformist ministers, for MSS. and other matters of curiosity or utility." It may be added that here the births of the Dissenters' children are registered.

Near to this spot also stands *Sion College*, founded by Dr. Thomas White, and of which a particular account is given in Northouck's history of London. Here the London clergy meet to transact their affairs, and it is enriched with an extensive library, and ample endowments.

To the foregoing systematical distribution of the several denominations, shall be added a few sects which cannot be classed with propriety under any one of the three general divisions which have been adopted.*

The *Methodists* in this country form a large part of the community. About sixty years ago they sprang up at Oxford, and difference of religious sentiment soon distributed them into two parties; the one under Mr. George Whitefield, the other under Mr. John and Charles Wesley. These leaders were educated at Oxford, and uniformly professed an attachment to the

* An amicable controversy has been held on the duration of Christ's ministry between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Newcombe, the present worthy primate of Ireland. Dr. Priestley, after Mann and others, confines Christ's ministry to only *one* year, whereas Dr. Newcombe contends that it lasted *three* years, which is indeed the commonly received opinion. A dispute has also arisen respecting the *Demoniacs*, mentioned in the New Testament. Some suppose that these unhappy men were possessed by *Demons* or *Devils*. Whilst others contend that they were only under the influence of natural diseases, and precisely in the same condition with the *madmen* and *epileptics* of modern times. The former is the more common opinion, but the latter prevails among the learned, and is defended by the learned Joseph Mede, and the Rev. Hugh Farmer, late of Walthamstow. The reader may also consult Dr. Disney's Life of Dr. Sykes, where a judicious and entertaining analysis is given of that liberal divine's publications, some of which respect this very subject.

articles

articles and liturgy of the established church, though they more commonly adopted the mode of worship which prevails among the dissenters. Upon their being excluded from the pulpits in many churches they took to preaching in the fields, and were attended by large audiences. In their public labors Mr. Whitefield was remarked for an engaging and powerful eloquence, and Mr. Wesley, both in preaching and writing, possessed a neat perspicuous simplicity. Even their enemies must confess that they contributed in several places to reform the manners of the lower classes of the community. The followers of Mr. Wesley (who died in London, 1791, aged 88) are *Arminians*, though many of his preachers incline to *Baxterianism*. The followers of Mr. Whitefield (who died in America, 1770, aged 56) are *Calvinists*, and were warmly patronized by the late Countess Dowager of Huntingdon. Both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield were indefatigable in promoting their views of the Christian religion; and it is well known for this purpose went over several times to America. Mr. Whitefield established an orphan house in Georgia, for which he made large collections, and which is now converted into a college for the education of young men designed chiefly for the ministry.

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The distinguishing principles of Methodism are salvation by faith only in Jesus Christ, perceptible conversion, and an assurance of reconciliation to God, which is inseparably connected with the *New Birth*. Several persons have written the life of Mr. Wesley. One has been published by Mr. Hampson, another by Dr. Whitehead, and a third by Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore. Mr. Whitefield's life was written by Dr. Gillies, a minister of the Scotch established church at Glasgow. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield published a minute account of their travels and itinerant labours, both in this kingdom and America. These accounts are entitled *Journals*, and serve to illustrate the principles and progress of Methodism. See also a sermon recommended by Mr. John Wesley, and preached by Dr. James Hamilton at Leeds, 1789, before the Methodist preachers assembled in conference, and a large body of people in connection with them. The appellation *Methodist* was first applied to the ancient physicians, who practised medicine by *method*, or regular rules, and was more especially given to Galen and his followers, in opposition to the practice of quackery or empiricism. But the term is now applied to this body of Christians, on account of the *methodical* strictness of their religious conduct,

and

and is by some indiscriminately appropriated to every one who manifests a more than ordinary concern for the salvation of mankind.

The *Moravians* are supposed to have arisen under Nicholas Lewis, Count of Zinzendorf, a German nobleman, who died 1760. They were also called *Hernbuters*, from *Hernbuth*, the name of the village where they were first settled. The followers of Count Zinzendorf are called *Moravians*, because the first converts to his system were some *Moravian* families. The society themselves however assert that they are descended from the old Moravian and Bohemian brethren, who existed as a distinct sect sixty years prior to the reformation. They also stile themselves the *United Brethren*; and, in general, profess to adhere to the Augsburg confession of faith. When the first reformers were assembled at Augsburg in Germany, the Protestant Princes employed Melancthon, a divine of great learning and moderation, to draw up a confession of their faith, expressed in terms as little offensive to the Roman Catholics as a regard for truth would permit. And this creed, from the place where it was presented, is called the *Confession of Augsburg*. It is not easy to unravel the leading tenets of the *Moravians*.

vians. Opinions and practices have been attributed to them of an exceptionable nature, which the more sensible of them totally disavow. They direct their worship to Jesus Christ; are much attached to instrumental as well as vocal music in their religious services; and discover a great predilection for forming themselves into classes, according to sex, age, and character. Their founder not only discovered his zeal, in travelling in person over Europe, but has taken special care to send missionaries into almost every part of the known world. They revive their devotion by celebrating agapæ, or love feasts, and the casting of lots is used amongst them to know the will of the Lord. The sole right of contracting marriage lies with the Elders. In Mr. La Trobe's edition of Spangenburg's exposition of Christian doctrine, their principles are detailed to a considerable length. There is a large community of them at a village near Leeds, which excites the curiosity of the traveller; and they have places of worship in various parts of the kingdom. Mr. Rinius published his candid narrative of this people, and Bishop Lavington (who wrote also against the Methodists) replied in 1755, in his *Moravians compared and detected*.

The *Universalists*,* properly so called, are those who believe, that as Christ died for all, so before he shall have delivered up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, *all* shall be brought to a participation of the benefits of his death in their restoration to holiness and happiness. Their design seems to be to reconcile the tenets of Calvinism and Arminianism, by uniting the leading doctrines of both, as found in the scriptures, from which union they think the sentiment of universal restoration naturally flows. They teach that the righteous shall have part in the first resurrection, shall be blessed and happy with Christ in his millennial kingdom, that over them the second death shall have no power; that the wicked will receive a punishment apportioned to their crimes, that punishment itself is a mediatorial work, and founded upon mercy, consequently that it is a mean of humbling, subduing, and finally reconciling the sinner to God.

They add, that the words rendered *everlasting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, &c. in the scriptures, are frequently used to express the duration of things

* For the above account of the Universalists, the author is wholly indebted to a minister of that persuasion; and part of the concluding paragraph was sent him by a gentleman who espouses the doctrine of destruction.

that have ended, and must end, as well as to express a never ending duration. They contend therefore that the subject with which the words are connected must determine the sense of them, and as there is nothing in the nature of future punishment which can be rendered as a reason why it should be endless, they infer that the above words ought always to be taken in a limited sense when connected with the infliction of misery.

They suppose this doctrine to be most consonant to the perfections of the Deity, most worthy of the character of Christ, as the Mediator, and the scriptures (say they) cannot be made consistent with themselves upon any other plan. They teach their followers that ardent love to God, and peace, meekness, candor, and universal love to men, are the natural result of these views.

This doctrine is not new. Origen, a Christian father, who lived in the third century, wrote in favour of it. The German Baptists, many of them, even before the reformation, propagated it. The people called Tunkers in America, descended from the German Baptists, mostly hold it. And even in England Mr. Jeremiah White, one of the ejected Non-conformist ministers, wrote a book in defence of it in the last century. The Chevalier

valler Ramsay, in his elaborate work of the philosophical principles of natural and revealed religion, espouses it. Archbishop Tillotson, in his sermons, supposes future punishment to be of limited duration, as does Dr. Burnet, master of the Charterhouse, in his book on the state of separate spirits.

But the writers of late years, who have treated most fully upon the subject, are the late Mr. Stonehouse, rector of Islington, Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, in America, and Mr. Elhanan Winchester. The writers who have of late particularly animadverted upon the doctrine are, in America, President Edwards, the present Dr. Edwards's son; and in England, Mr. Dan Taylor.

Between the system of *restoration* and the system of *endless misery*, a middle scheme of the final *destruction* of the wicked, has been adopted, more particularly by Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, Mr. Bourne, of Birmingham, and Mr. Marsom, who has strenuously contended for it in two small volumes just published. They say that the scripture positively asserts this doctrine of *destruction*, that the nature of future punishment (which the scripture terms death) determines the meaning of the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *for ever*, &c. as denoting *endless duration*, because no law ever did

or can inflict the punishment of death for a limited period; that the punishment cannot be corrective, because no man was ever put to death either to convince his judgment or to reform his conduct; that if the wicked receive a punishment *apportioned* to their crimes, their deliverance is neither to be attributed to the mercy of God, nor the mediation of Jesus Christ, but is an act of absolute justice; and finally, that the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ will never be delivered up, since the scripture asserts, that *of his kingdom there shall be no end*. Those who maintain these sentiments respecting the destruction of the wicked, are accused of espousing the doctrine of annihilation; but this accusation they repel, alledging that philosophically speaking, there can be no annihilation, and that destruction is the express phrase used in the New Testament. Of Mr. Marsom's publication there will soon be a second edition, with additions. These three systems of *universal restoration*, of *endless misery*, and of *total destruction*, have given rise to many warm controversies, and the impartial reader by consulting the above authors will be enabled to form his opinion on *the punishment of the wicked*; an article on all hands strongly maintained, and which is an interesting part of the Christian faith.

The

The Universalists have of late increased considerably, both in England and in America, but the tenet of restoration is not held exclusively by any body of Christians.

Sandemanians,* a modern sect, that originated in Scotland about the year 1728; where it is, at this time distinguished by the name of Glasrites, after its founder, Mr. John Glas, who was a minister of the established church in that kingdom, but being charged with a design of subverting the national covenant, and sapping the foundation of all national establishments, by maintaining that *the kingdom of Christ is not of this world*, was expelled by the synod from the church of Scotland. His sentiments are fully explained in a tract published at that time, intitled, "The Testimony of the King of Martyrs," and preserved in the first volume of his works. In consequence of Mr. Glas's expulsion, his adherents formed themselves into churches, conformable in their institution and discipline, to what they apprehended to be the plan of the first churches recorded in the New Testament. Soon after the

* The author has been favoured with this entire account of the Sandemanians by a gentleman of respectability, who belongs to that body of Christians.

year 1755, Mr. Robert Sandeman, an elder in one of these churches in Scotland, published a series of letters addressed to Mr. Hervey, occasioned by his Theron and Aspasio, in which he endeavours to shew, that *his* notion of faith is contradictory to the scripture account of it, and could only serve to lead men, professedly holding the doctrines called Calvinistic, to establish their own righteousness upon their frames, feelings, and acts of faith. In these letters Mr. Sandeman attempts to prove that faith is neither more nor less than a simple assent to the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, delivered for the offences of men, and raised again for their justification, as recorded in the New Testament. He also maintains that the word faith or belief, is constantly used by the apostles to signify what is denoted by it in common discourse, viz. a persuasion of the truth of any proposition, and that there is no difference between believing any common testimony and believing the apostolic testimony, except that which results from the testimony itself, and the divine authority on which it rests. This led the way to a controversy among those who are called Calvinists, concerning the nature of justifying faith, and those who adopted Mr. Sandeman's notion of it, and who are denominated Sandemani-
ans

ans formed themselves into church order, in strict fellowship with the churches of Scotland, but holding no kind of communion with other churches.

The chief opinions and practices in which this sect differs from other Christians, are, their weekly administration of the Lord's Supper; their love-feasts, of which every member is not only allowed, but required to partake, and which consist of their dining together at each other's houses in the interval between the morning and afternoon service. Their kiss of charity used on this occasion, at the admission of a new member, and at other times when they deem it necessary or proper; their weekly collection before the Lord's Supper, for the support of the poor and defraying other expences; mutual exhortation; abstinence from blood and things strangled; washing each other's feet, when, as a deed of mercy, it might be an expression of love; the precept concerning which, as well as other precepts, they understand literally. Community of goods, so far as that every one is to consider, all that he has in his possession and power liable to the calls of the poor and the church, and the unlawfulness of laying up treasures upon earth, by setting them apart for any distant, future, and uncertain use. They allow of public and private diversions so far

as they are not connected with circumstances really sinful: but apprehending a lot to be sacred, disapprove of lotteries, playing at cards, dice, &c.

They maintain a plurality of elders, pastors, or bishops, in each church, and the necessity of the presence of two elders, in every act of discipline, and at the administration of the Lord's Supper.

In the choice of these elders, want of learning and engagement in trade are no sufficient objection, if qualified agreeable to the instructions given to Timothy and Titus; but second marriages disqualify for the office; and they are ordained by prayer and fasting, imposition of hands, and giving the right hand of fellowship.

In their discipline they are strict and severe, and think themselves obliged to separate from the communion and worship of all such religious societies, as appear to them not to profess the simple truth for their only ground of hope, and who do not walk in obedience to it. We shall only add, that in every church transaction they esteem unanimity to be absolutely necessary.

The *Sabbatarians* are a body of Christians who keep the *seventh* day as the *Sabbath*, and are to be found principally, if not wholly, among the Baptists. The common reasons why Christians observe

observe the *first* day of the week as the Sabbath are; that on this day Christ rose from the dead; that the apostles assembled, preached, and administered the Lord's Supper, and it has been kept by the church for several ages, if not from the time when Christianity was originally promulgated. The Sabbatarians, however, think these reasons unsatisfactory, and assert that the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, was effected by Constantine, upon his conversion to the Christian religion. The three following propositions contain a summary of their principles as to this article of the Sabbath, by which they stand distinguished. 1st, That God hath required the observation of the seventh, or last day of every week to be observed by mankind universally for the weekly sabbath. 2dly, That this command of God is perpetually binding on man till time shall be no more; and 3dly, That this sacred rest of the seventh day sabbath is not (by divine authority) changed from the seventh and last to the first day of the week, or that the scripture doth no where require the observation of any other day of the week for the weekly sabbath, but the seventh day only. There are two congregations of the Sabbatarians in London, one among the General Baptists meeting in Mill-yard, the other among the Particular Baptists

meeting in Cripplegate. There are also a few to be found in different parts of the kingdom. This tenet has given rise to various controversies, and writers of considerable ability have appeared on both sides of the question. Mr. Cornthwaite, about the year 1740, published several tracts in support of it. The reader should also have recourse to Dr. Chandler's two discourses on the Sabbath; Mr. Amner's Dissertation on the Weekly Festival of the Christian Church, and Dr. Kennicott's Sermon and Dialogue on the Sabbath. The Sabbatarians hold in common with other Christians, the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and though much reduced in number, deserve a distinct mention in this little miscellany, on account of their integrity and respectability.*

Hutchinsonians, the followers of John Hutchinson, born in Yorkshire, 1674, and who in the early part of life served the Duke of Somerset, in the capacity of a steward. The Hebrew scriptures, he says, comprize a perfect system of natural philosophy, theology, and religion. In opposition to Dr. Woodward's natural history of the

* Most of the above particulars respecting the Sabbatarians were communicated to the author by some respectable individuals of that persuasion.

earth, Mr. Hutchinson, in 1724, published the first part of his curious book, called, *Moses's Principles*. Its second part was presented to the public in 1727, which contains, as he apprehends, the principles of the scripture philosophy, which are a plenum and the air. So high an opinion did he entertain of the Hebrew language, that he thought the Almighty must have employed it to communicate every species of knowledge, and that accordingly every species of knowledge is to be found in the Old Testament. Of his mode of philosophising the following specimen is brought forward to the reader's attention. "The air (he supposes) exists in three conditions, fire, light and spirit, the two latter are the finer and grosser parts of the air in motion: from the earth to the sun, the air is finer and finer till it becomes pure light near the confines of the sun, and fire in the orb of the sun, or solar focus. From the earth towards the circumference of this system, in which he includes the fixed stars, the air becomes grosser and grosser till it becomes stagnant, in which condition it is at the utmost verge of this system; from whence (in his opinion) the expression of *outer darkness, and blackness of darkness*, used in the New Testament, seems to be taken."

The followers of Mr. Hutchinson are numerous, and among others the Rev. Mr. Romaine, and the late Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden. They have never formed themselves into any distinct church or society. See an abstract of Mr. Hutchinson's writings by the Dean of Canterbury, and also Mr. Jones's Lectures on the figurative language of scripture.*

The

* In America the sects and denominations are much the same as on this side of the Atlantic. For an account of them the reader may consult Morfe's American Geography, and Winterbotham's History of America. The Dunkers and Shakers, however, two sects peculiar to America, deserve a brief notice.

The Dunkers (or Tunkers) arose about 1724, and formed themselves into a kind of commonwealth, mostly in Pennsylvania. They baptize by immersion, dress like the Dominican friars, never shave head or beard, have different apartments for the sexes, live chiefly on roots and vegetables, except at their love-feasts, when they eat only mutton. It is said that no bed is allowed them but in case of sickness, for in their separate cells they have a bench to lie upon, and a block of wood for their pillow. Their principal tenet is the mortification of the body, and they deny the eternity of future punishment. They are commonly called the *harmless* Dunkers.

The Shakers, instituted in 1774, are the followers of one Anna Leese, whom they style the elect Lady and the Mother of all the elect. They say she is the woman mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Revelations, can speak 72 tongues, and converses with the dead. Their enthusiasm is vented in jumping, dancing, and violent exertions of the body, which
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The *Mystics* are those who profess a pure and sublime devotion, with a disinterested love of God, free from all selfish considerations. Passive contemplation is the state of perfection to which they aspire. Of this sect there have been many singular characters, especially Madam Bourignon, a French lady, who made a great noise in the religious world. Fenelon, the amiable archbishop of Cambray, favoured the sentiments of this female devotee, for which he was severely reprimanded by the Pope. The Mystics suppose that certain passages of scripture have three mystical senses. Thus according to them, the word *Jerusalem*, which is the name of the capital of Judea, signifies allegorically, the church militant, morally a believer, and anagogically heaven. That passage also in Genesis, Let there be light, and there was light, which is according to the letter, corporeal light, signifies allegorically the Messiah, morally grace, and anagogically or mysteriously beatitude, or the light of glory. Other instances equally

bringing on *shaking*, they are termed Shakers. This dancing they say denotes their victory over sin. Their most favourite exercise is turning round for an hour or two, which in their opinion shews the great power of God. The Shakers, with respect to jumping, resemble some of the followers of Lady Huntingdon, in Wales, who used in their public meetings to adopt this frantic exercise, and who were there known by the name of *jumpers*.

fanciful

fanciful might be adduced, but sufficient has been brought forward to give the reader an insight into the nature and tendency of mysticism. Much of this mysteriousness belongs to a great many religious systems prevalent in the religious world. And some persons fully bent to gratify their passion for what is marvellous, imagine it inseparably connected with divine truth.

The *Millenarians* are those who believe that Christ will reign personally on earth for a thousand years, and their name, taken from the Latin, has a direct allusion to the duration of this spiritual empire. "The doctrine of a millenium, or a future paradisaical state of the earth (says a monthly reviewer) is not of Christian but of Jewish origin. The tradition is attributed to Elijah, which fixes the duration of the world in its present imperfect condition to 6000 years, and announces the approach of a sabbath of a thousand years of universal peace and plenty, to be ushered in by the glorious advent of the Messiah. This idea may be traced in the epistle of Barnabas, and in the opinions of Papias, who knew of no written testimony in its behalf. It was adopted by the author of the Revelations; by Justin Martyr, by Irænus, and by a long succession of the fathers. As the theory is animating and consolatory, and
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when divested of cabalistic numbers, and allegorical decorations, probable even in the eye of philosophy, it will no doubt always retain a number of adherents. Mr. Halhed is rather too impatient for this pleasing revolution, and labours to inculcate a belief, that on the 19th day of November next, 1795, at sun rise, will begin at Jerusalem, the mighty change. In order to support his hypothesis, he maintains that *Richard Brothers* truly estimates the age of the world at 5913 *solar* years, and that it is to endure only 6000 *divine* years, which like those of the Greeks, consist of 360 days only, but admit of no embolism or insertion of time. In this notion he is probably not solitary, as may be seen by consulting the *Encyclopædia Britannica*."

To this account of the *Millenium*, taken from the *Monthly Review*, shall be added that of Dr. Priestley, given in his *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*. "Some have supposed that Christ himself will reign in person upon earth, and that the martyrs will actually rise from the dead and live with him. But considering the figurative language of prophecy, it is more probable that the revival of the *cause* for which they suffered, is in reality the thing denoted by it. Besides, it is contrary to the clear sense of many passages of scripture

scripture that any persons, however distinguished by their virtues or sufferings, should receive their reward before the great day of judgment, after the general resurrection. Dr. Whitby has also advanced other very sufficient arguments against the literal interpretation of the millenium, which was adopted by some of the ancients, and, with some variations, hath been patronized by several modern divines, especially Mr. Joseph Mede, and Bishop Newton.”*

* The two following sects are occasionally mentioned in conversation, and the author has been asked by young people more than once for an explanation of them. A short account therefore is here subjoined.

The *Fifth Monarchy Men* were a set of enthusiasts in the time of Cromwell, who expected the sudden appearance of Christ to establish on earth a new *monarchy*, or kingdom. In consequence of this illusion some of them aimed at the subversion of all human governments. In antient history we read of four great monarchies, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian and the Roman, and these men believing that this new spiritual kingdom of Christ was to be the *fifth*, came to bear the name by which they are distinguished.

The *Muggletonians* were the followers of Ludovick Muggleton, a journeyman taylor, who with his companion Reeves (a person of equal obscurity) set up for great *Prophets* in the turbulent times of Cromwell. They pretended to absolve or condemn whom they pleased, and gave out that they were the two last witnesses spoken of in the Revelations, who were to appear previous to the final destruction of the world.

The

The *Swedenborgians* are the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish nobleman, who died in London, 1772. He professed himself to be the founder (under the Lord) of the *New Jerusalem Church*, alluding to the New Jerusalem, spoken of in the Book of the Revelation of St. John. His tenets, although peculiarly distinct from every other system of divinity in Christendom, are nevertheless drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and supported by numberless quotations from them. He asserts, that in the year 1743, the Lord manifested himself to him in a personal appearance; and at the same time opened his spiritual eyes, so that he was enabled constantly to see and converse with spirits and angels.* From that time he began to

* Baron Swedenborg, in his treatise concerning heaven and hell, and of the wonderful things therein, as heard and seen by him, makes the following declaration. "As often as I conversed with angels face to face, it was in their habitations, which are like to our houses on earth, but far more beautiful and magnificent, having rooms, chambers, and apartments in great variety, as also spacious courts belonging to them, together with gardens, parterres of flowers, fields, &c. where the angels are formed into societies. They dwell in contiguous habitations, disposed after the manner of our cities, in streets, walks, and squares. I have had the privilege to walk through them, to examine all round about me, and to enter their houses, and this when I was fully awake, having my inward eyes opened." A similar description is given of *heaven* itself, but the reader is referred to the treatise whence the above extract is taken.

print and publish various wonderful things, which, he says, were revealed to him, relating to heaven and hell, the state of men after death, the worship of God, the spiritual sense of the scriptures, the various earths in the universe, and their inhabitants, with many other extraordinary particulars, the knowledge of which was, perhaps, never pretended to by any other writer before, or since his time. He denies a Trinity of *persons*, in the Godhead, but contends for a divine Trinity in the single person of Jesus Christ alone, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; just like the human Trinity in every individual man, of soul, body, and proceeding operation: and he asserts, that as the latter Trinity constitutes one man, so the former Trinity constitutes one Jehovah God, who is at once the Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator. On this and other subjects, Dr. Priestley addressed letters to the members of the *New Jerusalem Church*, to which several replies were made, and particularly one by Mr. R. Hindmarsh, a printer. Baron Swedenborg further maintains, that the sacred scripture contains three distinct senses, called *celestial*, *spiritual*, and *natural*, which are united by correspondencies; and that in each sense it is divine truth, accommodated respectively to the angels of the three heavens, and also to men

on

on earth. This science of *correspondences* (it is said) has been lost for some thousands of years, viz. ever since the time of Job, but is now revived by Emanuel Swedenborg, who uses it as a key to the spiritual or internal sense of the sacred scripture, every page of which, he says, is written by correspondences, that is, by such things in the natural world, as correspond unto and signify things in the spiritual world. He denies the doctrine of atonement, or vicarious sacrifice, together with the doctrines of predestination, unconditional election, justification by faith alone, the resurrection of the material body, &c. and in opposition thereto maintains, that man is possessed of free-will in spiritual things; that salvation is not attainable without repentance, that is, abstaining from evils because they are sins against God, and living a life of charity and faith, according to the commandments; that man, immediately on his decease, rises again in a spiritual body, which was inclosed in his material body, and that in this spiritual body he lives as a man to eternity, either in heaven or in hell, according to the quality of his past life. It is further maintained by Baron Swedenborg and his followers, that all those passages in the sacred scripture, generally supposed to signify the destruction of the world by fire, &c.

commonly called the last judgment, must be understood according to the above-mentioned science of correspondences, which teaches, that by the end of the world, or consummation of the age, is not signified the destruction of the world, but the destruction or end of the present Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants of every description or denomination; and that this last judgment actually took place in the spiritual world in the year 1757; from which æra is dated the second advent of the Lord, and the commencement of a new Christian church, which, they say, is meant by the new heaven and new earth in the Revelation, and the New Jerusalem thence descending. Such are the general outlines of Baron Swedenborg's principal doctrines, collected from his voluminous writings. His followers are numerous in England, Germany, Sweden, &c. and also in America. They use a liturgy, and instrumental as well as vocal music, in their public worship.*

The *Quakers*, though mentioned last, yet by no means the least respectable sect, appeared in England about the year 1650. Their origin will be best given in their own words; "The beginning

* The whole of the above account was sent to the author for insertion by a gentleman of that denomination.

of the seventeenth century is known to have been a time of great dissension in England, respecting religion. Many pious persons had been dissatisfied with the settlement of the Church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Various societies of Dissenters had accordingly arisen; some of whom evinced their sincerity by grievous sufferings under the intolerance of those who governed church-affairs.* But these societies, notwithstanding their honest zeal, seemed to have stopped short in their progress towards a complete reformation;† and, degenerating into formality, to have left their most enlightened members still to lament the want of something more instructive, and consolatory to the soul, than the most rigorous observance of their ordinances had ever produced. Thus dissatisfied and disconsolate, they were ready to follow any teacher, who seemed able to direct them to that light and peace of which they felt the need. Many such in succession engaged their attention; until finding the insufficiency of them all, they withdrew from the communion of every visible church, and dwelt retired, and attentive to the inward state of their own minds: often deeply distressed for the want of that true knowledge of

* Sewell, p. 5, 6. Ed. 1722.
Ed. 1782.

† Penn, vol. 5. p. 211, 212.

God, which they saw to be necessary for salvation, and for which, according to their ability, they fervently prayed. These sincere breathings of spirit being answered by the extension of some degree of heavenly consolation, they became convinced, that as the heart of man is the scene of the tempter's attacks, it must also be that of the Redeemer's victory. With renewed fervency, therefore, they sought his appearance in their minds; and thus being renewedly furnished with his saving light and help, they not only became instructed in the things pertaining to their own salvation; but they discovered many practices in the world, which have a shew of religion, to be nevertheless the effect of the unsubjected will of man, and inconsistent with the genuine simplicity of the Truth.

George Fox* was one of the first of our Friends who was imprisoned. He was confined at Nottingham in the year 1649, for having publicly opposed a preacher, who had asserted that the more sure word of prophecy, mentioned 2 Pet. i. 19. was the Scripture; George Fox declaring that it was the Holy Spirit: and in the following year, being brought before two justices in Derbyshire, one of them, scoffing at G. Fox, for having bidden

* Besse's Sufferings of the People called Quakers, ch. 6. & 29. et passim.

him,

him, and those about him, tremble at the word of the Lord, gave to our predecessors the name of *Quakers*;* †an appellation which soon became and hath remained our most usual denomination; but they themselves adopted, and have transmitted to us, the endearing appellation of *Friends*.”†

It is difficult to give a specific statement of their tenets; but they may be found in a well written Apology by Robert Barclay, a learned Quaker, who died in Scotland, 1690. George Fox, the founder of this sect, was born 1624. He exhibited few articles of faith, and insisted mostly on morality, mutual charity, and the love of God. The religion and worship he recommended was simple and without ceremonies. To wait in profound silence for the influence of the Spirit, was one of the chief points he inculcated.

The Quakers have places of worship, where they regularly assemble on the Sabbath, though sometimes without vocal prayer, or any religious or practical exhortation. They reject water baptism and the Lord's Supper—have no distinct or-

* Bessé, Suff. 29.

† Sewell, 35.

‡ See *A Summary of the History, Doctrine, and Discipline of Friends*, written at the Desire of the Meeting for Sufferings in London. This pamphlet, and many particulars in the above account of the Quakers, were sent the author by a gentleman of that persuasion.

der of ministers—and are firm advocates for the Arminian system of doctrine.

Their internal government is much admired; their own poor supported without parochial aid, and their industry and sobriety are deserving of imitation. They also reprobate the destructive practice of war, the infamous traffic of slaves, and profess their abhorrence of religious persecution. Refusing to pay tithes, they suffer the loss of their goods and of their liberty, rather than comply with the demand, and their losses are emphatically termed by them *sufferings*. Many have endured long imprisonments on that account; and for refusing to pay tithes there are now seven persons in York Castle. As the Quakers cannot be made to take an oath in a court of justice, their affirmation is permitted in all civil, but not in criminal cases. With regard to the resurrection of the body, and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, and other capital points of Christianity, they have not yet explained themselves authentically. —Indeed, there seems to be a much greater uniformity in their dress than in their opinions, though it is probable that the generality of them adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. There are seven yearly meetings among them, viz, 1. London, to which
come

come representatives from Ireland; 2. New England; 3. New York; 4. Pennsylvania and New Jersey; 5. Maryland; 6. Virginia; 7. the Carolinas and Georgia. The form and colour of their clothes, together with their peculiar modes of salutation, have been thought to favour of affectation, though they certainly exhibit a striking contrast to the gaudy frippery and artificial courtesy of modern times. Voltaire, in his *Letters on the English Nation*, has some curious remarks on the Quakers; but in certain particulars they deem themselves calumniated by that satirical writer. At Ackworth they have a respectable school, to which Dr. Fothergill left legacies, and where about two hundred boys and one hundred and forty girls are educated. Towards the close of the last century, the respectable William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania, introduced and established a large and flourishing colony of them in America. See a full and an impartial account of the Quakers in Dr. Abraham Rees's improved edition of Chambers's *Encyclopedia*.*

THESE

* The professors of Christianity have instituted *Societies* for the advancement of religion. There are four which deserve to be mentioned: 1. *The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*, which erects charity schools in England and Wales, and distributes Bibles,

Common

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THESE are the divisions of human opinions, which characterise the more popular departments of the religious world. I have endeavoured to delineate them with accuracy and brevity. Each system boasts of admirers, and professes to have its peculiar arguments and tendencies. To a thoughtful mind they exhibit a melancholy picture of the human understanding—beclouded by sin, misguided through passion, and warped with prejudice. In drawing out the motley catalogue,

Common Prayer Books, and religious tracts; 2. *The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, which takes care that the West India islands and the British colonies in North America are provided with episcopal clergymen and school masters; 3. *A Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge*, designed to banish ignorance and profaneness from the Highlands and Western islands; and, 4. *A Society established in Ireland, called The Incorporated Society in Dublin, for promoting English Protestant Working Schools.*

Mr. Daniel Neal estimated the number of Dissenters in England at one hundred and fifty thousand families; but since that period it is believed that they have rather declined. At present the proportion of Nonconformists to the Members of the Church of England is supposed to be as one to five; and it is singular that the same proportion holds between the Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in Ireland. The reader is referred to Dr. Wenderbourn's *View of England towards the Close of the eighteenth Century*, where an instructive account of the several religious sects in this country is given, though it is wished that he had treated some of them with more candor and liberality.

several

several cursory reflections arose in my mind. A few only, such as may operate as a persuasive to religious moderation, and tend also to the improvement of other Christian graces, I shall submit to the reader's attention.

REFLECTIONS.

I pray God to give all his *ministers* and *people* more and more of the *Spirit of Wisdom* and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*, and to remove far from us those mutual *jealousies* and *animosities* which hinder our acting with that *unanimity* which is necessary to the successful carrying on of our common warfare against the enemies of CHRISTIANITY.

Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion.

I. SINCE the best and wisest of mankind thus differ on the speculative tenets of religion, let us modestly estimate the extent of the human faculties.

A modest estimate of the human faculties is an irresistible inducement to moderation. After laborious investigations, probably with equal degrees of knowledge and of integrity, men arrive at opposite conclusions. This is a necessary consequence

quence of present imperfection. Human reason, weak and fallible, soars with feeble, and often with ineffectual wing, into the regions of speculation. Let none affirm that this mode of arguing begets an indifference to the acquisition and propagation of religious truth. To declare that all tenets are alike, is an affront to the human understanding. The chilling hesitation of scepticism, the forbidding sternness of bigotry, and the delirious fever of enthusiasm, are equally abhorrent from the genius of true Christianity. Truth being the conformity of our conceptions to the nature of things, we should be fearful lest our conceptions be tainted with error. Philosophers suppose that the senses convey the most determinate species of information; yet these senses, notwithstanding their singular acuteness, are not endued with an instinctive infallibility. How much greater cause have we to mistrust the exercise of our rational powers, which often from early infancy, are beset with prejudices!

But reason, though imperfect, is the noblest gift of God, and upon no pretence whatever must it be decried. It distinguishes man from the beasts of the field—constitutes his resemblance to the Deity, and elevates him to the superiority he possesses over this lower creation. By Deists it

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is extolled, to the prejudice of revelation; and by Enthusiasts depreciated, that they might the more effectually impose on their votaries the absurdities of their system. Yet, strange inconsistency! even these enthusiasts condescend to employ this calumniated faculty, in pointing out the conformity of their tenets to scripture, and in fabricating evidence for their support. But beware of speaking lightly of reason, which is emphatically denominated *the eye of the soul*. Every opprobrious epithet with which the thoughtless or the designing dare to stigmatize it, vilifies the Creator. Circumscribed, indeed, are its operations, and fallible are its decisions. That it is incompetent to investigate certain subjects which our boundless curiosity may essay to penetrate, is universally acknowledged. Its extension, therefore, beyond its assigned boundaries, has proved an ample source of error. It has generated an endless list of paradoxes, and given birth to those monstrous systems of metaphysical theology, which are the plague of wise men, and the idol of fools. Upon many religious topics, which have tried and tortured our understandings, the sacred writers are respectfully silent. Where they cease to inform us we should drop our enquiries; except we claim superior degrees of information, and proudly deem ourselves the
more

more competent to decide on these intricate subjects. The primitive Christians, in some of their councils, elevated the New Testament on a throne—thus intimating their concern, that by that volume *alone* their disputes should be finally determined.*

2. The diversity of religious opinions implies no reflection upon the sufficiency of scripture to instruct us in matters of faith and practice, and should not, therefore, be made a pretence for uncharitableness.

Controversies are frequently agitated concerning words rather than things. This is to be ascribed chiefly to the ambiguity of language, which has been a fertile source of ecclesiastical animosities. But there are not in the world such a multitude of opinions as superficial observers may imagine. A common gazer at the starry firmament conceives the stars to be innumerable; but the astronomer knows their number to be limited—nay, to be much smaller than a vulgar eye would apprehend. On the subjects of religion, many men dream rather than think—imagine rather than believe.

* See Dr. Lawrence Brown's *Essay on the folly of Scepticism; the absurdity of dogmatizing on Religious Subjects, and the proper medium to be observed between these two extremes*; to which the gold medal of the Teylerian society of Haarlem was adjudged, April the 8th, 1786.

Were

Were the intellect of every individual awake and preserved in vigorous exercise, similarity of sentiment would be much more prevalent. But mankind will not think, and hence *thinking* has been deemed "one of the least exerted privileges of cultivated humanity." It unfortunately happens that the idle flights indulged by enthusiasts—the burdensome rites revered by the superstitious—and the corrupt maxims adopted by worldly minded professors, are charged on the scriptures of truth. Whereas the inspired volume is fraught with rational doctrines—equitable precepts—and immaculate rules of conduct. Fanciful accommodations—distorted passages—false translations, and forced analogies, have been the despicable means employed to debase and corrupt the christian doctrine. A calm and impartial investigation of the word of God, raises in our minds conceptions worthy the perfections of Deity—suitable to the forlorn circumstances of mankind, and adapted to purify and exalt our nature.

The Papists deprived the laity of the use of scripture, by restraining its use, and denying its sufficiency. The same reason also was assigned to vindicate the necessity of an infallible head to dictate in religious matters. Notwithstanding these artful devices to produce unanimity of sentiment,

timent, they were not more in possession of it than the Protestants. The discordant sects, which at different periods sprang up in the bosom and disturbed the tranquility of the Catholic church, are demonstrative proofs that they failed to attain the desired object. Pretences, therefore, however goodly, should be rejected if they tend to invalidate the sufficiency, or disparage the excellence of holy writ. Least of all should diversity of sentiment be alledged, for it does not originate in the scriptures themselves, but in the imbecility of the understanding—in the freedom of the will—in the pride of passion—and in the inveteracy of prejudice. Deists, nevertheless, who are expert in observing what may be construed into an objection against revealed religion, declaim loudly on this plausible topic. On account of the diversity of sentiment which obtains, they charge the Bible with being defective in a species of intelligence it never pretended to communicate. Unincumbered with human additions, and uncontaminated with foreign mixtures, it furnishes the believer with that information only, which illuminates the understanding—meliorates the temper—invigorates the moral feelings—and improves the heart. *All scripture given by inspiration, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction*

*struction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

3. Let not any one presume to exempt himself from an attention to religion, because some of its tenets seem involved in difficulties.

Upon articles which promote the felicity, and secure the salvation of mankind, the scripture is clear and decisive. The curiosity of the inquisitive, and the restlessness of the ingenious, have involved some subjects of theological disquisition in considerable obscurity. Dr. Paley, speaking of the disputes which distract the religious world,

* As the abettors of infidelity are assiduous in depreciating the sacred volume, the following just encomium on this invaluable treasure is seriously recommended to the young reader's attention. "Where is there to be found any book but the BIBLE which contains so much to inform, impress, and delight reflecting minds, laid together in a manner so extensively adapted to the various turns of understanding, taste, and temper, which people of different and distant countries, through a long succession of ages, have held in so much reverence, and read with so much advantage; where it is difficult to determine which are most distinguished, ease and simplicity, or sublimity and force, but where all are so beautifully united; where there is so little to discourage the weakest spirit if docile, and so much to gratify the strongest if candid; where the fancy and the heart, the intellect and the conscience, are applied to by turns, with such familiarity and yet such majesty; in fine where the frailties, disorders, and distresses of human nature, are all as feelingly laid open and the remedies which heaven has provided, so tenderly applied,"

FORDYCE.

happily remarks, "that the rent has not reached the foundation." Incontrovertible are the facts upon which the fabric of natural and revealed religion is reared; and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. He who seriously and dispassionately searches the scriptures, must confess that they teach, in explicit terms, that God rules over all—that man is fallen from his primæval rectitude—that the Messiah shed his blood for his restoration—and that in a future state rewards await the righteous, and punishments will be inflicted on the wicked.

From the preceding sketch of the different opinions of Christians, it appears that controversies have been chiefly agitated concerning the person of *Christ*—the subject of the *divine favor*—and the article of *church government*. But what was the specific matter of disputation? Not whether *Christ* has actually appeared on earth to introduce a new dispensation; nor whether God is disposed to shew *grace* or favour towards fallen man; nor whether the professors of religion ought to submit themselves to certain regulations, or *church government*, for mutual benefit. These are truths revered by every denomination, and the only point of contention has been, what *particular views* are to be entertained of these interesting facts. The Trinitarian,

tarian, the Arian, and the Socinian, equally acknowledge the *divinity* of Christ's mission, or that he was the Messiah predicted by the ancient prophets; and the chief point of dispute is, whether this Messiah be a man highly inspired---or one of the angelic order---or a being possessed of the attributes of Deity. The Calvinist---the Arminian---and the Baxterian also, each of them firmly believes that the *grace of God hath appeared*, and differ only respecting the wideness of its extent, and the mode of its communication. Similar observations might be transferred to the subject of church government, and the administration of ceremonies. But sufficient has been said to shew that the differences subsisting between Christians, do not affect the truth of Christianity, nor hazard the salvation of mankind.

Faint indeed is the light thrown by revelation on certain subjects. Yet no lover of righteousness need distress himself, whether he be mistaken in leading a life of virtue and of piety. Practical religion lies within a narrow compass. The sayings of Christ embrace almost every part of human conduct, though his disciples have been lamentably deficient in paying them the attention due to their importance. Jesus Christ assures us---that *to love the Lord our God with all our hearts,*

is the first and great commandment—and that the second is like unto it—to love our neighbour as ourselves. They entertain mistaken views of the *glorious gospel*, who consider it inimical to the prosperity of the human race. Descending from a God of love, and presented to us by his only begotten Son—every mind should have opened for its reception. Wrangling should have been prevented by the clearness of its fundamental doctrines, hesitation about obedience precluded by the justice of its precepts, and the beauty of its examples should have captivated the most indifferent hearts.

The perplexity in which some religious tenets are involved, instead of alienating us from the practice of righteousness, should quicken our enquiries after truth. Indeed, upon a serious and intelligent individual, it produces this beneficial effect. Having in his eye the scripture as the only standard—he is the more alive to free enquiry, when he contemplates the diversity of religious systems; and more accurately scrutinizes their nature, examines their foundation, and ascertains their tendencies. This mode of arriving at truth, is attended with sterling advantages. Our knowledge is enlarged—our candour established—and our belief founded on the firm basis of conviction.

Such

Such a believer reflects an honour upon the denomination with which he connects himself. For feeling sensibly the difficulties of religious investigation, he presumes not to charge with *heresy*, those of his fellow christians who differ from him; nor is he such a stranger to the perfections of the Deity, and to the benign spirit of his religion, as to consign them over to the regions of future misery. Of Mr. Gouge, an eminent Nonconformist minister, it is thus honourably recorded by the great and good Archbishop Tillotson—"He allowed others to differ from him even in opinions that were very dear to him, and provided men did but *fear God, and work righteousness*, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgement about things less necessary: in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all persuasions."*

4. Let us reflect with pleasure in how many important articles of belief all christians are agreed.

* Had the above *Catholic* sentiments of the Archbishop been indulged towards the Dissenters at Birmingham, we should have never witnessed those riots which reflect a lasting disgrace on the present century. Whatever were the religious or political sentiments of the sufferers, such a mode of silencing *sedition*, or of extirpating *heresy*, only serves to aid the cause it meant to exterminate. Every good man shudders at such scenes—and a philosophy less pure than that taught us by Jesus Christ, would lead us to hold in execration all such diabolical procedures.

Respect-

Respecting the origin of evil—the nature of the human soul—the existence of an intermediate state—and the duration of future punishment, together with points of a similar kind, opinions have been, and in this imperfect state ever will continue to be different. But on articles of faith, far more interesting in themselves, and far more conducive to our welfare, are not all Christians united? We *all* believe in the perfections and government of one God—in the degradation of human nature through transgression—in the vast utility of the life, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ—in the assurance of the divine aid—in the necessity of exercising repentance, and of cultivating holiness—in a resurrection from the dead—and in a future state of rewards and punishment. Cheerfully would I enter into a minute illustration of this important part of the subject. But the devout and intelligent Dr. Price has ably discussed it in his first sermon on the Christian Doctrine, to which discourse I refer the Reader, and recommend it to his repeated and impartial perusal. Many Christians are more anxious to know wherein their brethren *differ* from them, than wherein they are agreed. This betrays an unhappy propensity to division, and bears an unfavourable aspect

pect on mutual forbearance, one of the highest embellishments of the Christian character. An enlightened zeal is perfectly compatible with religious moderation, which is more particularly opposed to the furious spirit of uncharitableness, the gangrene of genuine christianity. From the shy and distant deportment of men of different persuasions towards each other, a stranger to them all would with difficulty be brought to believe that they looked up to the *same* God—confided in the *same* Saviour—and were bending their steps towards the *same* state of future happiness. To me often has the christian world had the appearance of a subdued country, portioned out into innumerable districts, through the pride and ambition of its conquerors, and each district occupied in retarding each others prosperity. Alas! what would the *Prince of Peace* say, were he to descend and sojourn among us. Would he not reprove our unhallowed warmth—upbraid us with our divisions—chide our unsocial tempers—and exhort to amity and concord? “This antipathy to your fellow Christians,” would he say, “is not the *effect* of my religion, but the *want* of it. My doctrines, precepts, and example, have an opposite tendency. Had you *learned of me* you would have never uttered
against

against your brethren terms of reproach, nor lifted up the arm of persecution. The new commandment I gave unto you was---*That ye love one another.*"

The ingenious Mr. Seed, pertinently observes, " Our own particular darling tenets, by which we are distinguished from the bulk of Christians, we look upon as our private inclosures, our private walks, in which we have property exclusive of others, and which we take care to cultivate, beautify, and fence in against all invaders. To the received notions, however *important*, we are more indifferent, as the common field and public walks, which lie open to every body." Were the professors of the Gospel once fully sensible how they coincide on the fundamental facts of natural and revealed religion, they would cherish with each other a more friendly intercourse---unite more cordially to propagate religion, both at home and abroad, and superior degrees of success would crown their combined exertions for the purpose. Much is it regretted that disputes have generally been agitated concerning unessential points, and with an acrimony diametrically opposite to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That controversy is in itself injurious to truth, no intelligent individual will insinuate. When conducted with ability and candour,

dour, light has been struck out---errors have been rectified---and information, on interesting subjects, has been communicated to the public. But alas! controversy has been perverted to evil purposes. To many who have engaged in theological discussion, victory, not truth, appears to have been the object of pursuit. Seduced by unworthy motives they swerved from the line of conduct prescribed by an Apostle, and contended *boisterously* rather than *earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. Fiery controversialists, hurried away by impetuosity of temper, or exasperated by the opposition of an acute and pertinacious adversary, have disgraced the polemic page by opprobrious terms, and ungenerous insinuations. Thus are infidels furnished with an additional objection to revealed religion---the investigation of interesting truth terminates in mutual reproaches; and Christians of different sentiments, driven still farther from each other, are the less fitted to associate together in the common mansions of the blest. To this pernicious mode of agitating disputes, there are, however, exceptions, and instances might be adduced. In the defence of Christianity, and in the support of its particular doctrines, writers have stood forth whose temper and liberality breathe the genuine spirit

spirit of the Christian Religion. Doddridge's letters to the Author of Christianity not founded in Argument---Bishop Watson's reply to Gibbon---and Campbell's answer to Hume on Miracles, are admirable examples of the candour with which religious controversies should be invariably conducted. In an age enlightened like the present, this conciliating spirit was to be expected; and we indulge the pleasing hope, that times still more auspicious to truth are approaching, when the amicable discussion of *every* doctrine supposed to be contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall obtain an universal prevalence.*

5. We should allow to others the same right of private judgment in religious matters, which we claim and exercise ourselves.

It is replied---“We forbid not the sober use of this privilege.” But who can estimate the *sobriety* of another man's speculations? and by reprobating the opinions which a serious brother may happen

* TRUTH, moral and divine, flourishes only in the soil of freedom. There it shoots up and sheds its fruit for the healing of the nations. Civil and religious liberty, therefore, are two of the greatest earthly blessings which heaven can bestow on man. Thrice happy are the people who experience the benefits of good government, unburdened by the impositions of oppression, and who enjoy the sweets of liberty unembittered by the curse of anarchy and of licentiousness!

to

to entertain in consequence of free investigation, we tacitly condemn that operation of his mind which induced him to take up such tenets. This is the spirit of Popery in disguise. Cautiously exercising his reason, and devoutly examining the sacred records, *let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* This was the judicious advice of Paul to the Primitive Christians, and no substantial reason has been, or ever will be given for its being abandoned. For a Protestant, who demands and exercises the right of private judgment, to deny it his brother, is an unpardonable inconsistency. It is also an act of injustice, and, therefore, contrary to reason---condemned by revelation, and prejudicial to the best interests of mankind. He who insults your person---steals your property---or injures your reputation---subjects himself to the punishment which the law denounces against such offences. What then can we think of the man who attempts to rob you of the right of private judgment?---a jewel of inestimable price—a blessing of the first magnitude! Were we once to relinquish *thinking for ourselves*, and indolently to acquiesce in the representations of others—our understandings might soon groan beneath the absurdities of other's creeds, and our attention be distracted by the perplexed nature

of our religious services. Hitherto persons have never been wanting unreasonable enough to impose on their brethren articles of faith. The late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, an avowed foe to ecclesiastical tyranny, has traced its sources with his usual acuteness, and pronounces them to be power—law—patronage—office—the abuse of learning, and mistaken piety. These pretences for domination over conscience are plausible, and by their speciousness millions have been deceived. But explain to a man of common sense the nature and foundation of religious liberty, and the infatuation ceases. He must perceive that the Father of spirits hath authorized no man to dictate to another what he is to believe—much less to impose his dogmas under pain of eternal punishment;

Let Cæsar's dues be ever paid,
To Cæsar and his throne;
But consciences and souls were made,
To be the Lord's alone.

WATTS.

Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? was the energetic language in which Christ reproached the Pharisees; and *prove all things* was Paul's manly exhortation to the church at Thessalonica. These passages alone prove, beyond the possibility of dispute, that both Christ and Paul

Paul were distinguished patrons of free enquiry. Free enquiry, even in its fullest extent, has been found serviceable to the interests of religion. Hereby error ceases to be perpetuated, and truth emerges from those shades of darkness, with which she has been industriously enveloped by the artful and the designing. Survey the page of ecclesiastical history---mark the intervals of languor when the right of private judgment lay dormant ---then was the church of Christ debilitated and pestered with an heterogeneous mass of errors. Excellently is it remarked in a periodical publication---“ No man can write down truth. Inquiry is to truth what friction is to the diamond. It proves its hardness---adds to its lustre---and excites new admiration.” The ablest advocates for Christianity confess, that by the attacks of its enemies provoking examination, it has been benefited rather than injured. To infidel writers we are indebted for Butler’s profound Analogy ---Law’s Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion---Campbell’s valuable Dissertation on Miracles---Newton’s elaborate work on the Prophecies---and other performances which reflect as much honour on the names of their respective authors, as they have rendered service to the glo-

rious cause they espoused. Let none indulge fears from the examination of the Christian Religion.

In this *polite* age it is the fashion to compliment *Deists* on their good sense and their honesty. Of their *good sense* those persons can make the justest estimate who are best acquainted with the disconsolate nature, and pernicious tendency of their absurd systems. Of their *honesty* we may form a tolerable judgment, from the oblique mode in which Christianity has been uniformly attacked. Scarcely a *Deist* has come forward with an open avowal of his intention, but skulking behind some unconsecrated altar, aims a deadly blow at the best and purest system of religion which has been ever instituted. *Hobbes* employed ambiguity---*Bolingbroke* abuse---*Voltaire* ridicule---*Hume* an affected reverence for what he was undermining---*Gibbon* irony---*Godwin* unmanly insinuation, and *Paine* the most outrageous misrepresentation. These are means worthy of their cause, and will without doubt bring their system eventually into universal discredit. Did, indeed, *thinking* *Deists* propose their objections to revelation with fairness; use their utmost endeavours to get their objections obviated; and providing a perfect solution could not be obtained, "wait the great teacher death, and God adore,"---a better opinion might be

be entertained of their principles, their temper and their conduct. But when they avail themselves of every opportunity to unsettle and overturn the faith of thousands, to loosen obligations moral and divine, and with one rude blow to cut off the dearest hopes of humanity, we *must* exclaim in the language of scripture, *Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation; O my soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, O my honor! be not thou united.*

Among the eccentricities of the eighteenth century, is to be reckoned the existence of even *speculative atheists*, who at the same time profess the most *unbounded* zeal for the happiness and prosperity of mankind! Certainly such persons must have abandoned the sober use of their faculties, or must have had their moral sense shockingly perverted. David, the Psalmist, long ago hath assured us, that *the fool only, faith in his heart there is no God.* Lord Bacon, the greatest of philosophers, declares, "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. And therefore God never wrought a miracle to convince *Atheism*, because his ordinary works convince it." And Cowper, one of

the most original poets of the present times, in his ingenious Poem the *Task*, pours forth the following energetic lines;

————— God proclaims
 His hot displeasure against foolish men,
 That live an *Atheist* life; involves the heaven
 In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds
 And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
 Kindle a fiery bile upon the skin,
 And putrify the breath of blooming health.
 He calls for famine; and the meagre fiend
 Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips.
 And taints the golden ear: he springs his mines,
 And desolates a nation at a blast.
 Forth steps the spruce philosopher and tells,
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs
 And principles: of causes how they work.
 By necessary laws, their sure effects
 Of action and re-action. He has found
 The source of the disease that nature feels,
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
 Thou fool! Will thy discovery of the cause
 Suspend the effect or heal it? Has not God
 Still wrought by means since first he made the world?
 And did he not of old employ his means
 To drown it? What is his creation less
 Than a capacious reservoir of means,
 Formed for his use, and ready at his will?
 Go, dress thine eyes with eye salve; ask of him,
 Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
 And learn, tho' late, the *genuine cause* of all.

6. Let

6. Let us be careful to treat those who differ from us with kindness.

It is observed by a shrewd writer of the present day, " that no religion whatsoever, true or false, can excuse its own members, or accuse those of any other, upon the source of persecution. The principles which give rise to it are common to all mankind, and they influence them as they are men, and not as they belong to this or that persuasion. In all persuasions the *bigots* are persecutors; the men of a cool and reasonable piety, are favorers of toleration, because *BIGOTS not taking the pains to be acquainted with the grounds of their adversaries tenets*, conceive them to be so absurd and monstrous, that no man of sense can give into them in good earnest. For which reason they are convinced that some oblique bad motives induce them to pretend to the belief of such doctrines, and to the maintaining them with obstinacy. This is a very general principle in all religious differences, and it is the *corner-stone* of all PERSECUTION." But believing those who differ from us to be the disciples of error, they have a powerful claim on our compassion. As a further incentive to a lenient conduct, it should be remembered—that we differ from them just as much as they do from us. By either party, therefore, no anathemas

mas should be hurled, and a proneness to persecution should be instantly eradicated. The Quakers, in their address to James the Second, on his accession, told him, that they understood he was no more of the established religion than themselves. "We therefore hope (said they) that thou wilt allow us that liberty which thou takest thyself." The terms *schism* and *heresy* are in the mouths of many, and it is no unfrequent case to find that those who use them most, least understand their real import. Dr. Campbell (who lately favoured the public with an excellent translation of the Four Gospels) thus concludes a learned dissertation on the subject: "No person (says he) who in the spirit of candour and charity adheres to that which, to the best of his judgment, is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is in the scriptural sense either *schismatic* or *heretic*---and he on the contrary, whatever sect he belongs to, is more entitled to those odious appellations who is most apt to throw the imputation upon others." Would to God! that this observation, made by a great and good man, were engraven on the memory of every individual in Christendom.

Upon the advantages arising from Christian moderation, we might largely expatiate, and to detail the evils which have flown from an unenlightened

lightened and furious zeal, would be to stain our page with blood. The incomparable bishop Hall, in the last century, wrote a treatise on moderation, and has discussed the subject with that eloquence and ability which are peculiar to all his writings. But this great and good man towards the close of this same treatise, forgetting the principles which he had been forcibly inculcating, devotes one solitary page to the execrable cause of intolerance. This page he concludes with these remarkable expressions; "*Master Calvin did well approve himself to God's church, in bringing Servetus to the stake at Geneva.*" Blessed Jesus! how art thou wounded in the house of thy friends? After this deplorable instance of human inconsistency, should not the most eminent of thy followers beware, lest by indulging even in the slightest degree a spirit of intolerance, they be insensibly led either to adopt or to applaud practices, which, under the specious mask of an holy zeal, outrage the very first principles of humanity?

Christians, indeed, of almost *every* denomination, appear at times to have forgotten, that harshness widens rather than closes the breaches which previous diversity of sentiment may have occasioned. Coercive measures reach not the mind, and the issuing edicts to extort assent to speculative

tive tenets, is the bombast of civil authority. Truth rests on evidence. But what has *evidence* to do with exertions of power—implements of torture—and scenes of devastation? From the commencement of the fourth century, down to the illustrious æra of the reformation, wide and unmolested was the empire of ignorance and of superstition over the human mind. At Rome, for a series of ages, the chair of infallibility was filled by a succession of intolerant and domineering Pontiffs. Complicated systems of cruelty were industriously devised and inhumanly practised, for the support and defence of their most holy faith. Out of that once respectable capital of the world, the demon of persecution rushed forth brandishing his torch, and deluged the church of Christ with the blood of her martyrs. Impatient for the destruction of the human race he flew into different regions of the earth, framed racks—fixed stakes—erected gibbets—and, like a pestilence, scattered around him consternation and death! Shall the mild and evangelical genius of Protestantism, countenance a temper which incites to such execrable deeds, and exultingly enrols the names of the perpetrators in the calendar of the saints? In this twilight state of being, to expostulate is our province, to inveigh and persecute is forbidden.

forbidden. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, prohibits rash accusations, cruel surmises, and malignant anathemas. Had an inviolable regard been paid to the golden rule, *Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you*, intolerance would have never reared its ensanguined crest to affright the children of men. *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*, was our Saviour's pertinent reprimand to the disciples, who, in the plenitude of their zeal, would have called down fire from heaven to consume the deluded Samaritans. Too often does a portion of this accursed spirit reign in the breasts of Protestants. Hence censures are poured forth, hatreds are engendered, and a preparation for heaven is retarded. Instead, therefore, of presumptuously usurping the seat of judgment, which the Almighty has exclusively reserved to himself, and of impiously aiming to become the dispensers of the divine vengeance, wait the issue of all things, in deep and reverential silence. A wise and a good God will solemnly decide the business, when *he judges the world in righteousness!**

* See Mr. A. Robinson's judicious piece, entitled, — *A Short History of the Persecutions of Christians by Heathens, Jews, and Christians*. Second Edition. The great and good Archbishop Leighton, when contemplating the successive persecutions which have taken place, used to say — *The world went mad by turns!*

7. Let us not repine because perfect unanimity of religious sentiment is unattainable in this present state.

A repining spirit is the source of ill temper towards those who dissent from us; but it seems to be the intention of the Divine Being, that we should think differently concerning certain points of faith and practice. Variety marks the works of God: It is impressed throughout the circumference of the natural, the animal, and the intellectual world. Above us, we behold the dazzling brightness of the sun—the pale splendour of the moon—the mild twinkling of the stars—and the variegated colours which adorn the firmament of heaven. Around us, the surface of the earth is diversified into a thousand beautiful forms, and in the animal, the vegetable, and the fossile kingdoms, no two individual productions are perfectly alike. Within us, upon the slightest examination, we discern our minds stamped with an original peculiarity. From senseless idiotism, up to the piercing sagacity of Newton, how numerous are the gradations of intellect! Minds are of various sizes. Their capacities, habits, and views are never in strict conformity with each other. In some cases, therefore, diversity of opinion flows from the very structure of our understanding. To
fall

fall out with this branch of the dispensations of God is to arraign his wisdom. Doubtless he might have shed upon us such a superior degree of light that we should have seen as with one eye, and have been altogether of one mind. But the Supreme Being has otherwise ordered it, and with becoming resignation let us acquiesce in the propriety of the appointment. "If it *must* be with us (says good Bishop Hall) as with two famous rivers in the East, that they run three score miles together in one channel, with their waters divided in very color from each other; yet let it be (as it is with them) without noise, without violence."

Innumerable and unavailable have been the attempts made in the successive ages of the church to produce *unanimity of sentiment*. For this purpose legislatures have decreed various acts, poured forth torrents of human blood, and perpetrated deeds at which humanity sickens, shudders, and turns away with disgust. Francis the First, King of France, used to declare, "that if he thought the blood in his arm was tainted with the *Lutheran heresy*, he would have it cut off, and that he would not spare even his own children, if they entertained sentiments contrary to the Catholic Church." Pride in one person, passion in a second, prejudice in a third, and, in a

fourth

fourth, investigation, generates difference of opinion. Should diversity be deemed an evil, it is incumbent on rational beings, and congenial to the dignity of the Christian profession, to improve it to valuable purposes. It is an indisputable fact, that different denominations have, in every age of the church, kept a jealous eye over each other; and hereby the scriptures, the common standard to which they appealed for the truth of their respective tenets, have been preserved in greater purity. It may also be added, that diversity of opinion quickens the enquirer after truth—and gives scope for the exercise of charity, which in one passage of the sacred writings is pronounced superior to *faith and hope*; and, in another passage, termed *the bond of perfectness*. Much improvement have good men extracted from the common evils of life, by these evils giving rise to graces and virtues which otherwise, perhaps, would have had no existence; or, at least, would have been faintly called forth into action. To perceive the justice of this observation, it is not necessary that we be profound contemplators of human affairs.

Under the accumulated difficulties of faith and practice, by which we are embarrassed in this sub-

lunary

lunary state of imperfection, we should meditate on the doctrine of a providence, which administers the richest consolation. The dominion exercised by the Supreme Being over the works of his hands, is neither partial as to its objects, narrow in its extent, or transitory in its duration. Unlike earthly monarchs, who expire in their turn, and who are successively borne into the tombs of their ancestors, *the King of Saints liveth and reigneth for ever and ever!* Evils, indeed, have entered the world, and still continue to distress it. But these evils have not crept into the system unknown to its great Author, and the attributes of Deity ensure their extirpation. Our rejoicing is—*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* Glorious, therefore, *must* be the termination of the divine dispensations. The august period is predicted in sacred writ, and lies concealed in the womb of time. Distant may be its arrival, but its blessings, once realized, will compensate the exercise of your faith, and the trial of your patience:

“ One part—one little part we dimly scan,
Thro’ the dark medium of life’s feverish dream;
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem,
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem ;

Of from apparent ills our blessings rise,
O! then renounce that impious self esteem,

That aims to trace the secrets of the skies;

For thou art but of dust—*be humble and be wise.*”

Finally, Penetrated with a sense of the imperfection of this present life, let us be exceedingly cautious how we form our religious sentiments—watch unremittingly over our tempers and conduct, and aspire to that better world, where *pure and unadulterated truth* shall be disclosed to our view.

Of all the subjects presented to the human mind religion claims the first and the greatest attention. If there be a *God, a Providence, a Saviour, and a future state of retribution*, these weighty truths ought to be pressing upon our minds, and presiding over our conduct. To familiarize ourselves with their evidence, to lay open our souls to their energy, and to promote by every *honorable* method, their spread and establishment among mankind, should be our noblest ambition. Zeal is an elevated and an useful passion. It is forcibly and repeatedly enjoined in the sacred writings. It forms

* The dissertations of Dr. Price, especially that on Providence, are deserving of serious attention. Nothing but the firm belief of a Providence can tranquillize the mind, when at this moment even Europe, the most civilized quarter of the globe, is agitated with violent convulsions.

the

the leading trait of excellence in the best and most enlightened characters. Indeed an individual can scarcely be pronounced truly good, except he possesses a portion of this celestial fire. But let us be exceedingly careful that our warmth be temperate and regular. Zeal confined within the limits prescribed by reason and scripture, is attended with the most blessed consequences. Loosened from these restraints, like the devouring conflagration, it involves in one undistinguishable ruin the victims of its fury, and triumphs in the desolation it has effected. How different is the Christian influenced by a zeal purely *evangelical*, from the monster, who is either swoln with the venom of uncharitableness, or pregnant with persecution for conscience sake !*

Indeed the light and darkness now blended together, instead of generating a spirit of scepticism, or precipitating us into acts of violence, should impel us to look for *the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. What ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter*, was our Sa-

* "Mistake me not (says good Richard Baxter) I do not slight *orthodoxy*, nor jeer at the name ; but only disclose the pretences of devilish zeal in pious or seemingly pious men. The slanders of some of these, and the bitter opprobrious speeches of others have more effectually done the Devil's service, under the name of *orthodoxy*, and zeal for truth than the malignant scorers of godliness."

viour's kind declaration to his disciples, respecting an event which occurred whilst he continued to sojourn amongst them. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that we shall not remain ignorant of matters of superior importance, when the proper period of communicating higher degrees of information arrives. We may, however, be assured, that the spirit of God guides all good men into *necessary* truth. This is a sentiment in which the wisest of mankind concur; and upon which learned divines, after their most penetrative researches, are obliged ultimately to rest. A venerable and distinguished christian father, pronounced the greatest *heresy* to be a *wicked life*. Devoutly is it wished that those who are clamorous about speculative tenets, would level their artillery more against the violation of the preceptive part of our religion.*

* For choice subjects, just sentiments, elegant language, and useful tendency, Blair's sermons stand particularly distinguished, and cannot be too frequently perused. Dr. Stennett's discourses also on personal religion, on domestic duties, and on the parable of the sower are deserving of much attention. Nor would we omit warmly recommending all the works of Mr. Job Orton, more especially his discourses on *Eternity*, on *Public Worship*, and on *Christian Zeal*. The attentive and frequent perusal of such publications would tend to counteract that infidelity, dissipation, and worldly mindedness, by which this present age is so unhappily characterized!

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The eloquent Saurin pointedly exclaims—
 “Why are not ecclesiastical bodies as rigid and
 severe against *heresies of practice* as they are against
heresies of speculation? Certainly there are here-
 sies in morality as well as in theology. Coun-
 cils and synods reduce the doctrines of faith to
 certain propositional points, and thunder anathe-
 mas against all who refuse to subscribe them.
 They say; cursed be he who doth not believe the
 divinity of Christ: cursed be he who doth not be-
 lieve hypostatical union, and the mystery of the
 cross: cursed be he who denies the inward opera-
 tions of grace, and the irresistible efficacy of the
 spirit. I wish they would make a few canons
 against *moral heresies*. How many are there of
 this kind among our people!” These observa-
 tions, made by the intelligent Saurin, respecting
 the refugee Protestants in Holland, are pregnant
 with instruction, and applicable to the Protestants
 in our times. Their anathemas are directed more
 against error than against unrighteousness. Where-
 as, vice is the more formidable enemy to the wel-
 fare of mankind. To the word of God there-
 fore, let us have constant recourse, and thence de-
 rive *the doctrine which is according to godliness*,
 pure as the light of heaven, and refreshing as the
 dew of the morning. The Gospel of Jesus Christ,
 justly

justly understood and cordially believed, enlightens the mind—calms the troubled conscience—rectifies depraved propensities—and introduces us into the habitations of *the spirits of just men made perfect.*

But alas ! mankind instead of ascertaining what is *truth*, and *how* it can best exert its influence over the several departments of conduct, are occupied in schemes of *interested ambition*, or sunk into *criminal indifference.* Of too many of the human race we may say with Hawkefworth, “they lie down to sleep—they rise up to trifle,” or with Addison, “they make provision for this life as though it were never to have an end, and for the other life as though it were never to have a beginning.” Time, the most precious deposit with which God hath entrusted them, is squandered away in scenes of vanity and of dissipation. Johnson also declares, that “notwithstanding the warnings of philosophers, and the daily losses and misfortunes which life forces on their observation, such is the absorption of their thoughts, in the business of the present day—such the resignation of their reason, to empty hopes of future felicity—or such their unwillingness to foresee what they dread, that every calamity comes *suddenly* upon them, and not only presses them as a burden, but

but crushes as a blow." Upon death they seldom bestow a serious thought. Though awful in its nature, frequent in its recurrence, and alarming in its consequences, it leaves on their minds no permanent impression. Without emotion they behold their fellow-creatures snatched from off the busy theatre of action, and driven one after another, either by disease or accident, into *the house appointed for all living*. Upon the decease, indeed of relatives and friends, they heave a sigh, utter an exclamation, shed a tear, but clothing themselves in the mournful garments of sorrow, the tragedy is quickly over. Re-assuming their former views, and laying their minds open afresh to the dominion of their passions, they return with an insatiable avidity to the ordinary occupations and amusements of life. Thus proceeds the general tenor of their existence on earth, till *they* also in their turn are swept away into the silent receptacles of the dead. But why are men thus forgetful of their original destination? Why lose sight of the end for which their benevolent Creator *breathed into their nostrils the breath of life*? Why not be making diligent preparation for the hour of dissolution, which closes the scene of their activity, and terminates their state of trial?

disposition of the mind is not to be guided

and the heart

Pilgrims

Pilgrims and sojourners on earth, we are hastening to an eternal world, and a few more fleeting years will place even the youngest of us before the tribunal of Heaven. Whether we can abide the awful scrutiny which shall be instituted at the last great day, "for which all other days were made," is a question of infinite importance, and most intimately concerns rational and accountable creatures. Amidst the din of controversy, and the jarrings of adverse parties, the opinions of the head are substituted for the virtues of the heart, and thus is practical religion most deplorably neglected. Fleeing, therefore, those pernicious disputes, which damp our devotion, and contract our benevolence, let us assiduously cultivate the means by which our faith may be invigorated—our hope enlivened—our charity confirmed—and our affections elevated to *the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*. The veil now thrown over this preliminary state, and concealing from our view celestial objects, shall be speedily removed. Then bidding an adieu to prejudices which darken the understanding, irritate the temper, and deform the spirit, we shall embrace each other with perfect love; and shall be astonished at ourselves for having been on earth so addicted to unprofitable disputations,

disputations, and so backward to the exercise of brotherly kindness, and of Christian charity.

Almighty God! look down on thine erring creatures. Pity their darkness and imperfection. Direct them into *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Banish from their hearts the bitterness of censure. Cherish in their minds a spirit of moderation and love towards their fellow Christians. To their zeal add knowledge, and to their knowledge charity. Make them patient and humble under the difficulties which adhere to their faith, and under the perplexities which accompany their practice: *Guide them by thy counsel, and through the mediation of thy Son, Jesus Christ, receive them into thy kingdom and glory.---AMEN.*

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